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11 Beach Bay Lane • Figure Eight Island • $2,895,000

Located on nearly an acre in the center of the area's most sought after beach, Figure 8 Island. The house features a reverse floor plan with stunning views of the ocean and sound. The 4 bedroom, 3 1/2 bath bath design has been updated with a beautiful granite/stainless kitchen with a huge breakfast bar overlooking the expansive living area with vaulted ceiling and dining area, also vaulted.

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7113 E. Creeks Edge • Landfall • $1,750,000

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1208 Pembroke Jones Drive • Landfall • $1,185,000

Landfall-spectacular contemporary located just off the Intracoastal Waterway and overlooking one of Landfall's tranquil ponds. This 4300 square foot residence offers abundant natural light through it's two-story lateral wall of glass. The open floor plan features a state-of-the-art kitchen overlooking the expansive great room and covered porch.

2126 Deer Island Lane • Landfall • $834,000

Thoughtfully designed and quality built by Whitney Blair, this open floor plan includes formal rooms as well as soaring great room with 20' ceilings that open to the gourmet kitchen with granite, stainless and 6 burner gas cooktop.

805 Gull Point • Landfall • $819,000

Located in the quiet cul-de-sac of one of Landfall's prettiest streets, Gull Point Road, this true post and beam home is tucked down a tree-lined winding driveway and borders the scenic tidal Howe Creek with soaring ceilings, open floor plan and floor to ceiling windows. This home embraces the rolling, wooded site and offers complete privacy.

4 Mallard Street • Wrightsville Beach • $2,650,000

It's all about the ocean . . . Ocean views abound from the chef's kitchen featuring quartz counters with a huge center island, stainless Subzero, gas Wolf cooktop, Miele dishwasher plus Fisher-Paykel drawer dishwasher.

19 Comber Road • Figure Eight Island • $1,750,000

Located on the north end of North Carolina's most private beach, Figure 8 Island, this 4 bedroom, 4 1/2 bath contemporary beach design features outstanding ocean views from the second row location with easy beach boardwalk access.

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551 S. Lumina Avenue C-2 • Wrightsville Beach • $1,095,000

What could be better than south end ocean front on Wrightsville Beach? How about including a gazebo and 22 foot boat slip on Banks Channel! This top floor corner unit at The Doak has been recently updated with new flooring, carpet and interior paint. Fully furnished with excellent rental history, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths with granite/stainless kitchen and granite/tile baths.

2506 N Lumina Avenue D3C • Wrightsville Dunes • $998,500

Total renovation completed in 2018 including a new custom kitchen and both bathrooms, new lighting and plumbing fixtures, new appliances, beautiful new flooring throughout, custom made doors and many more custom features that you have to see in person to fully appreciate.

2227 Deepwood Place • Landfall • $750,000

Overlooking the tranquil pond on Deepwood Drive, this quality built brick home features formal areas as well as an open kitchen/sunroom combination, a total of five bedrooms (including the master and two others on the first floor).

2 Oak Landing Road • Oak Landing Towhomes • $575,000

ocated in Wilmington's sought after Shandy neighborhood (off Greenville Loop) with new kitchen! This three bedroom, 2 Ð bath townhouse features 35' boat slip, an open floor plan with vaulted cypress ceiling and great natural light with floor to ceiling glass overlooking a 2 acre pecan grove.

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274 Beach Road N | Figure Eight Island | Currently Listed at: $4,499,500

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1936 LONDON LANE

Carla D Lewis: 910.612.5220 | List Price: $1,324,000

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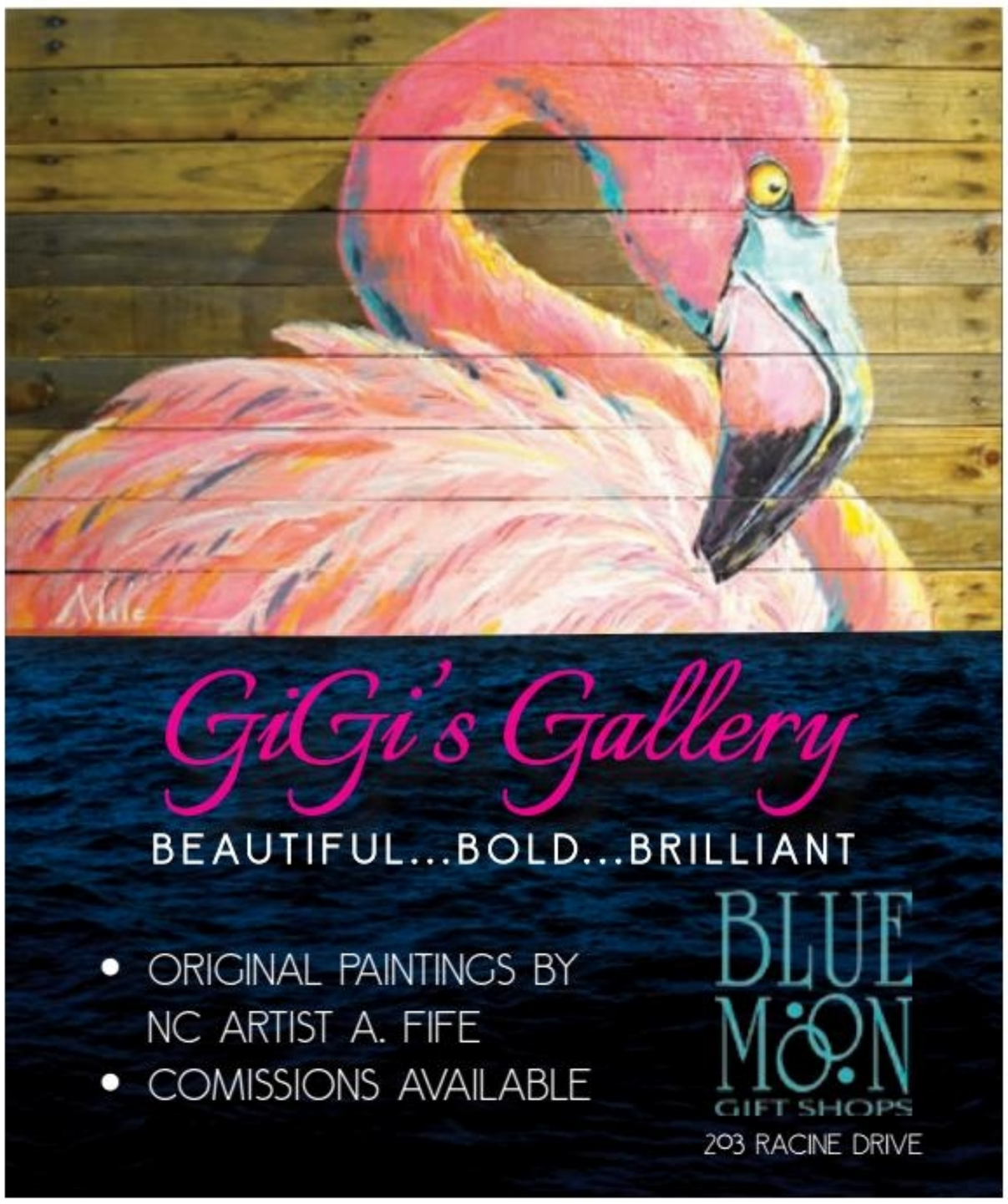
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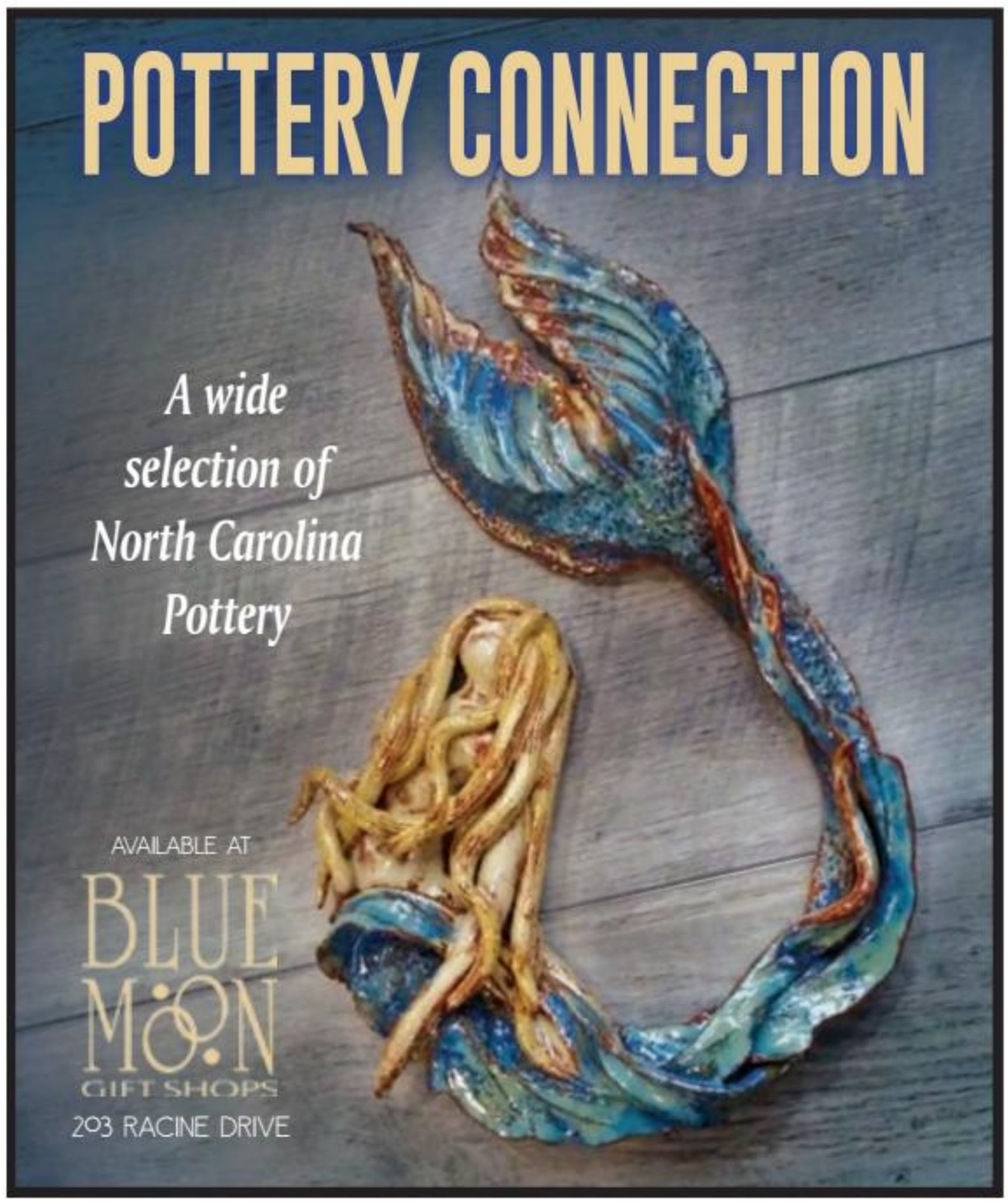
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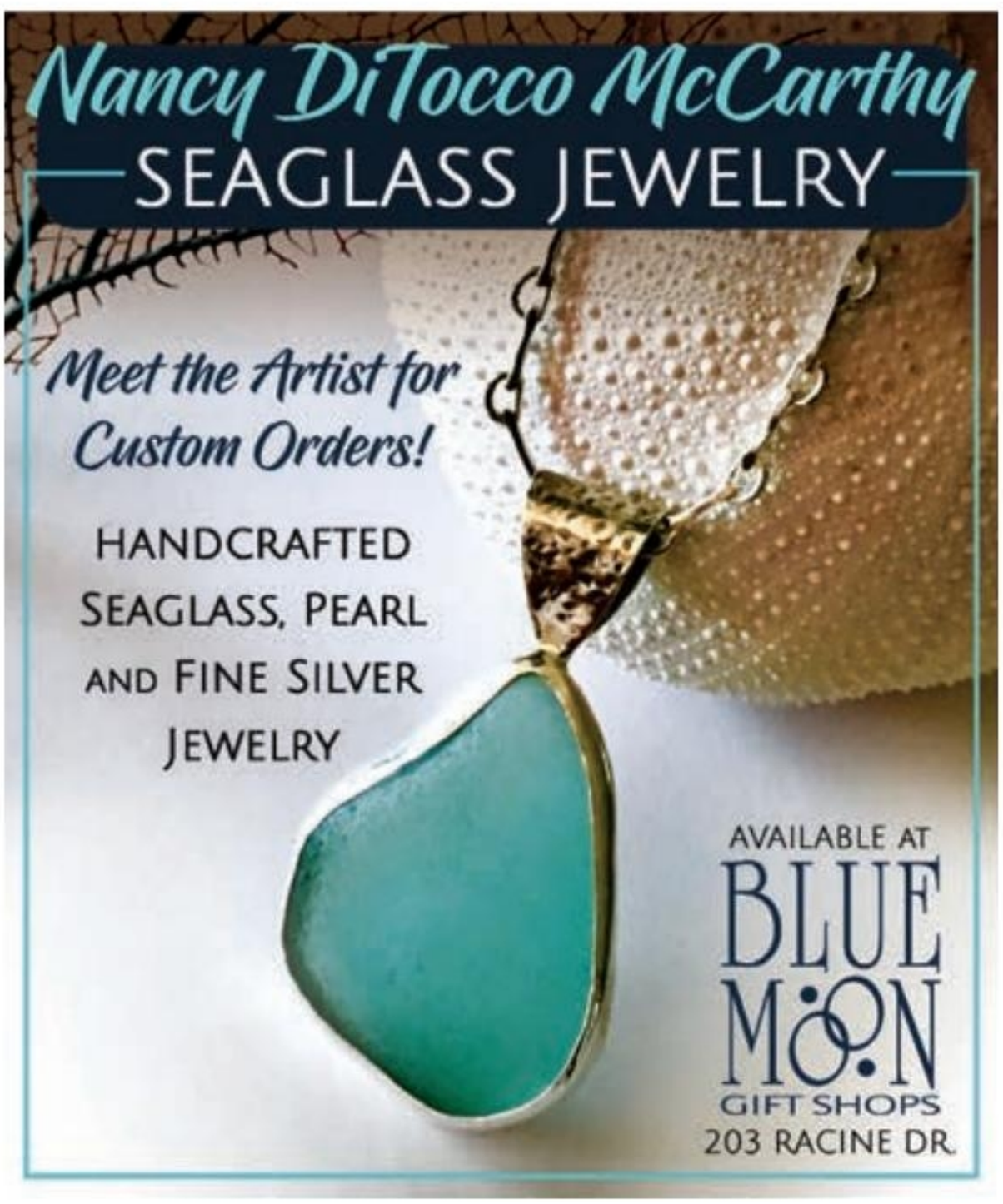
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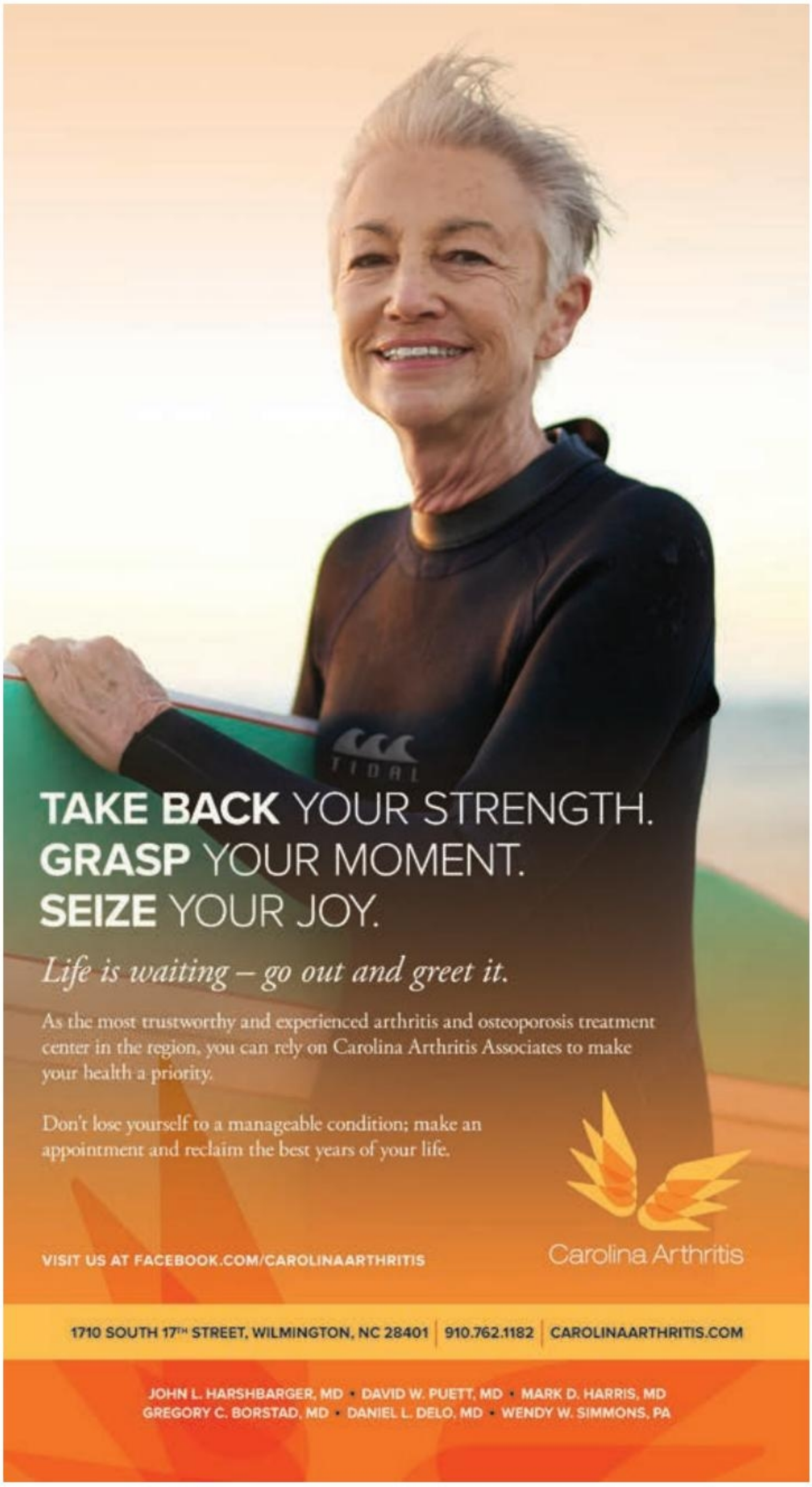
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5725 Oleander Dr., Unit B-4
Wilmington, NC 28403

David Woronoff, Publisher

Jim Dodson, Editor
jim@thepilot.com

Andie Stuart Rose, Art Director
andie@thepilot.com

William Irvine, Senior Editor
910.833.7159
bill@saltmagazinenc.com

Alyssa Rocherolle, Graphic Designer

Lauren Coffey, Graphic Designer

CONTRIBUTORS

Ash Alder, Harry Blair, Susan Campbell, Wiley Cash, Clyde Edgerton, Jason Frye, Nan Graham, Virginia Holman, Mark Holmberg, Sara King, D. G. Martin,Mary Novitsky, Dana Sachs, Stephen E. Smith, Astrid Stellanova, Bill Thompson

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Mallory Cash, Rick Ricozzi, Bill Ritenour, Andrew Sherman, Mark Steelman

ADVERTISING SALES

Ginny Trigg, Advertising Director
910.693.2481 · ginny@saltmagazinenc.com

Elise Mullaney, Advertising Manager
910.409.5502 · elise@saltmagazinenc.com

Courtney Barden, Advertising Representative
910.262.1882 · courtney@saltmagazinenc.com

Brad Beard, Graphic Designer
bradatthepilot@gmail.com

Darlene Stark, Circulation Director 910.693.2488

Steve Anderson, Finance Director 910.693.2497

OWNERS
Jack Andrews, Frank Daniels Jr., Frank Daniels III, Lee Dirks, David Woronoff

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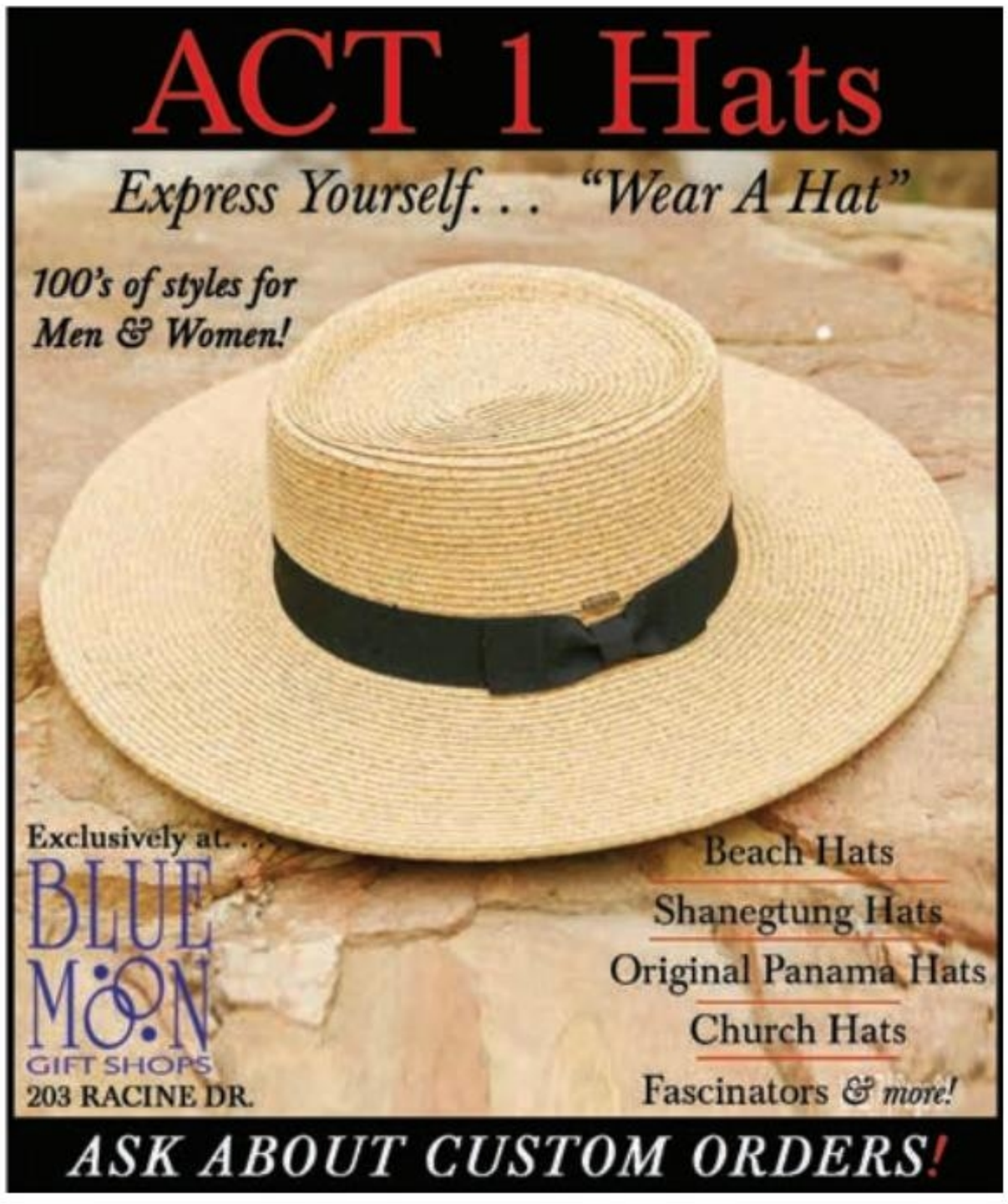
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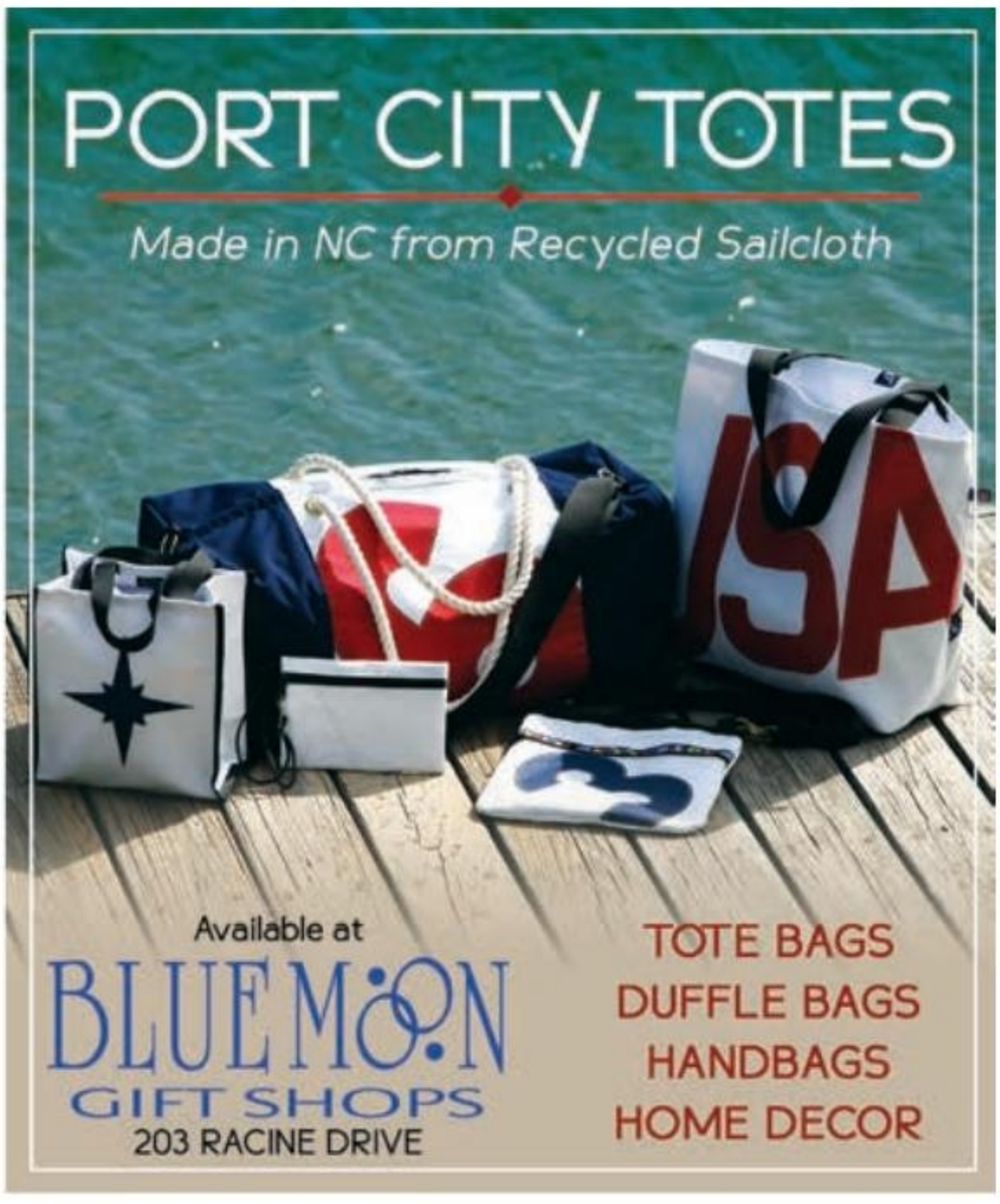
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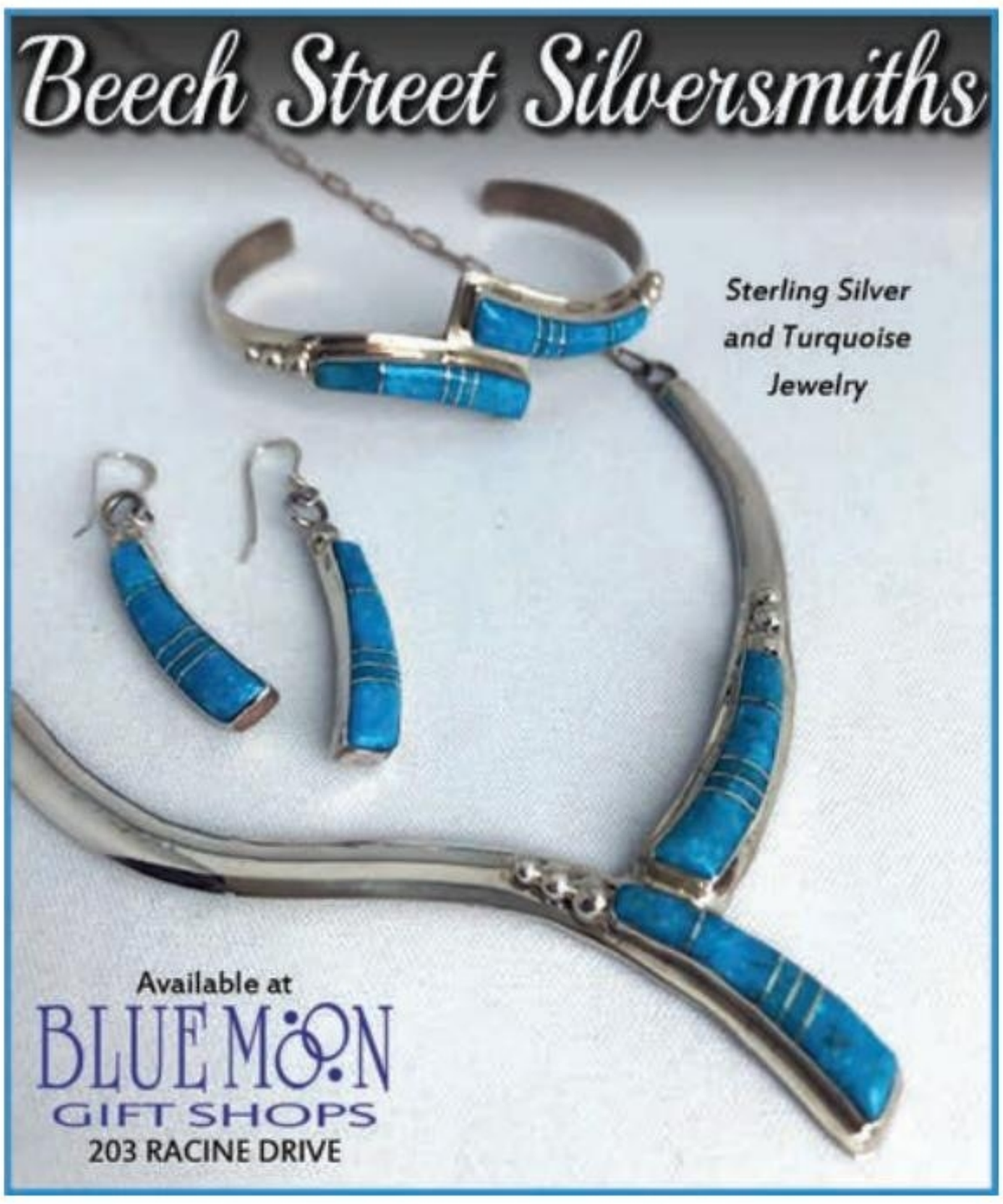
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Smoke and Memory

Both are easily gone in a puff

By Jim Dodson

On a cool and misty autumn afternoon not long ago, I found myself taking up a secret pleasure I'd abandoned years ago.

While doing book research for the day in Staunton, Virginia, the lovely Shenandoah Valley town just off the Great Wagon Road that brought thousands of Scots-Irish to the American South, I turned up my coat's collar and took a stroll though downtown in search of a cup of tea and a bookshop before hitting the road for home.

On the corner, I spotted an old-fashioned tobacco shop.

Its window display featured a selection of gorgeous, hand-carved pipes with names such as Mastro Geppetto and Savinelli Estate.

Beyond them, two gents sat in comfortable wing chairs, smoking pipes and having a quiet rainy day conversation.

On a lark, I stepped inside.

If Marcel Proust's main character in *Swann's Way* associated the taste of a simple madeleine with childhood, my version might well be a whiff of pipe smoke.

The scent of aromatic pipe smoke, you see, has a similar effect on me, conjuring up nice family memories and not a little amusement at my own youthful vanity.

Walter Dodson, my paternal grandfather, a cabinetmaker whose name I bear, smoked a Dr. Grabow pipe, the inexpensive brand once manufactured in the pretty Carolina mountain town of Sparta. Walter was a man of few words but a rural polymath who could make anything with his hands. He taught me to fish and how to cut a straight line with a handsaw.

Some of my fondest memories of him are of fishing together in a Florida bayou or watching my grandfather work in his carpenter's shop, his Grabow pipe clenched in his teeth, fragrant smoke drifting all around us. Walter was the age I am today — mid 60s — but looked positively ancient to me, and a bit like an old Indian chief. In fact, family lore holds that his mother was a woman of Native American heritage.

I was 10 or 12 years old at the time of these encounters, a bookish kid under the influence of adventure tales in which wise forest wizards and noble Indian chiefs smoked pipes. So it all seemed perfectly natural and wildly romantic to me.

I never worked up the courage to ask my grandfather if I could try a puff of his Grabow pipe, and he never offered.

Ironically, about this same time, heeding the new surgeon general's warnings about the health hazards of smoking, both my parents ditched their cigarettes, hoping my older brother and I wouldn't take up the habit.

They needn't have worried.

Following the prescribed formula for pulling an "all-nighter" for a geology exam my freshman year at college, like an idiot I drank an entire pot of black coffee and smoked half a pack of Camels, my first cigarettes ever. Somewhere around midnight, after throwing up and peeing myself silly, I fell asleep and managed to miss my 8 a.m. exam.

I've never touched another cigarette.

That same autumn, however, I drove home on a beautiful October afternoon to surprise my father at his office, hoping we might slip out for nine holes of golf before dark.

I found him sitting in his office reading *Markings*, a spiritual classic by Dag Hammarskjöld, the Scandinavian diplomat who'd served as the secretary-general of the United Nations.

He was also smoking a handsome wooden pipe.

"Oh no! You've discovered my secret pleasure," he said with a sheepish grin.

Given my recent unhappy run-in with cigarettes, not to mention his own abandoned habit, I was surprised to see him smoking anything.

He explained that pipes were different from cigarettes. For one thing, you didn't inhale pipe smoke into your lungs but allowed it to circulate in the air around you, "pleasing both the nose and the soul" — one reason, he reckoned, so many writers, poets and philosophers chose to smoke a pipe.

"It was either Charles Darwin or James Barrie who said a pipe stimulates noble thoughts" he said.

"Maybe it was either Santa Claus or Hugh Hefner," I suggested. "They smoke pipes, too."

I learned that he'd bought his first pipe in London during the Blitz and brought the habit home with him. "I thought it made me look like an intellectual," he added with a chuckle. "Truth is, it reminded me of home. Your granddad smoked a pipe. It was pure comfort, a pacifier with smoke and memory."

I wondered how frequently he smoked his pipes. There were three on his desk. Two looked new, one looked very old.

"Not very often. A dozen times a year, tops. It's not a habit — more a simple pleasure."

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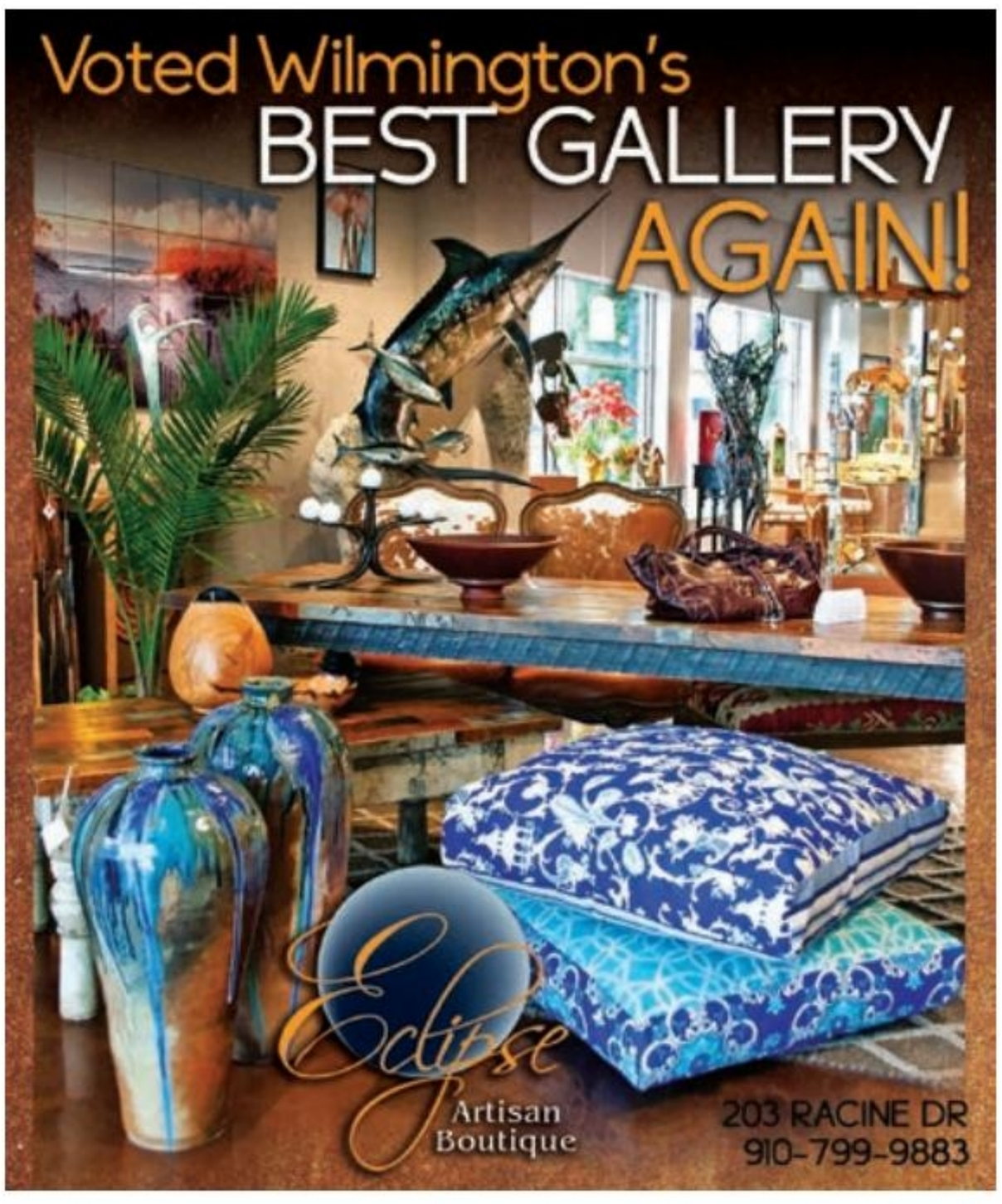
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He laughed, handing me his oldest-looking pipe. It had a cracked stem.

"This one belonged to your grandfather. You can have it, if you wish."

"Can I smoke it?"

"Better try this one instead. Fits the hand nicely. Not much bite."

It was a handsome thing, burled briarwood, a simple Italian affair with an elegant long stem. He showed me how to pack and light it and watched me puff away, reminding me not to inhale.

"So what do you think, college boy?" He asked.

I liked it.

He smiled. "We won't tell your mother."

That Christmas, though, he gave me a copy of *Markings* and a gorgeous handmade-Italian pipe that looked like it had been carved from a knot of mahogany.

I loved my new pipe even if my new college girlfriend didn't.

She was a fellow English lit major, a self-described Marxist who had expensive tastes in footwear. She laughed out loud when she saw me pull out my fancy new Italian pipe and fire it up at a party where the guests were smoking a different kind of pipe and something that smelled like burning shag carpet.

"My God," she hooted. "You look like an idiot! Next thing you'll be wearing a corduroy jacket with elbow patches and calling yourself a Republican." Had I been quicker on my feet, I might have told her that Che Guevara and her personal hero Virginia Woolf both smoked pipes, and that William Wordsworth carried his favorite pipe with him during his famous Lake District rambles. I could just picture the bard sitting on the crumbling wall at Tintern Abbey, dreaming of his lost Lucy as he sent perfect smoke rings into the still summer air.

We broke up a short time later — irreconcilable differences over politics and pipes — at which point I went straight out and bought a second-hand corduroy jacket with elbow patches, hoping I might look like John le Carré on the back cover of his latest espionage thriller.

By the time I was a married father living in a forest of birch and beech trees near the coast of Maine, I owned several handmade pipes, which I typically only smoked when summer vanished and the weather turned.

Our kids, however, always loved watching me smoke my pipe, probably because I could blow smoke rings prettier than either Bilbo Baggins or Gandalf the wizard.

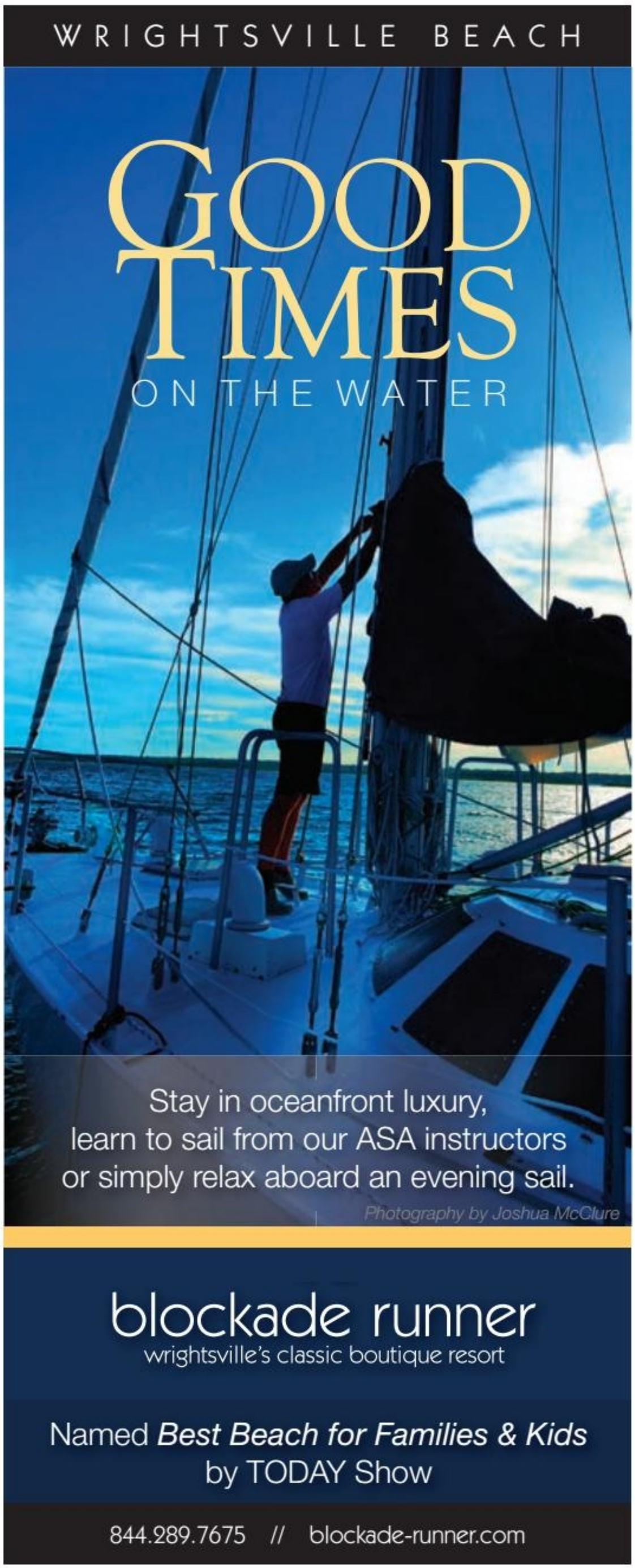
Which may explain why, on that recent misty afternoon in western Virginia, realizing it had been many years since I even held a pipe in my hand, I impulsively bought a cheap Missouri Meerschaum pipe and an ounce of mild tobacco and had a fine time making smoke rings as I hoofed around town.

Back home, I went searching for a box in the basement that contained items from my office desk in Maine and found a few of my favorite pipes from those days, but not my grandfather's Grabow or even the handsome Italian number my father gave me once upon a time.

They may be waiting somewhere in an unopened box, like artifacts from a carpenter's workshop or a spy novelist's corduroy jacket.

Or maybe they simply vanished, like smoke and memory.

Contact Editor Jim Dodson at jim@thepilot.com.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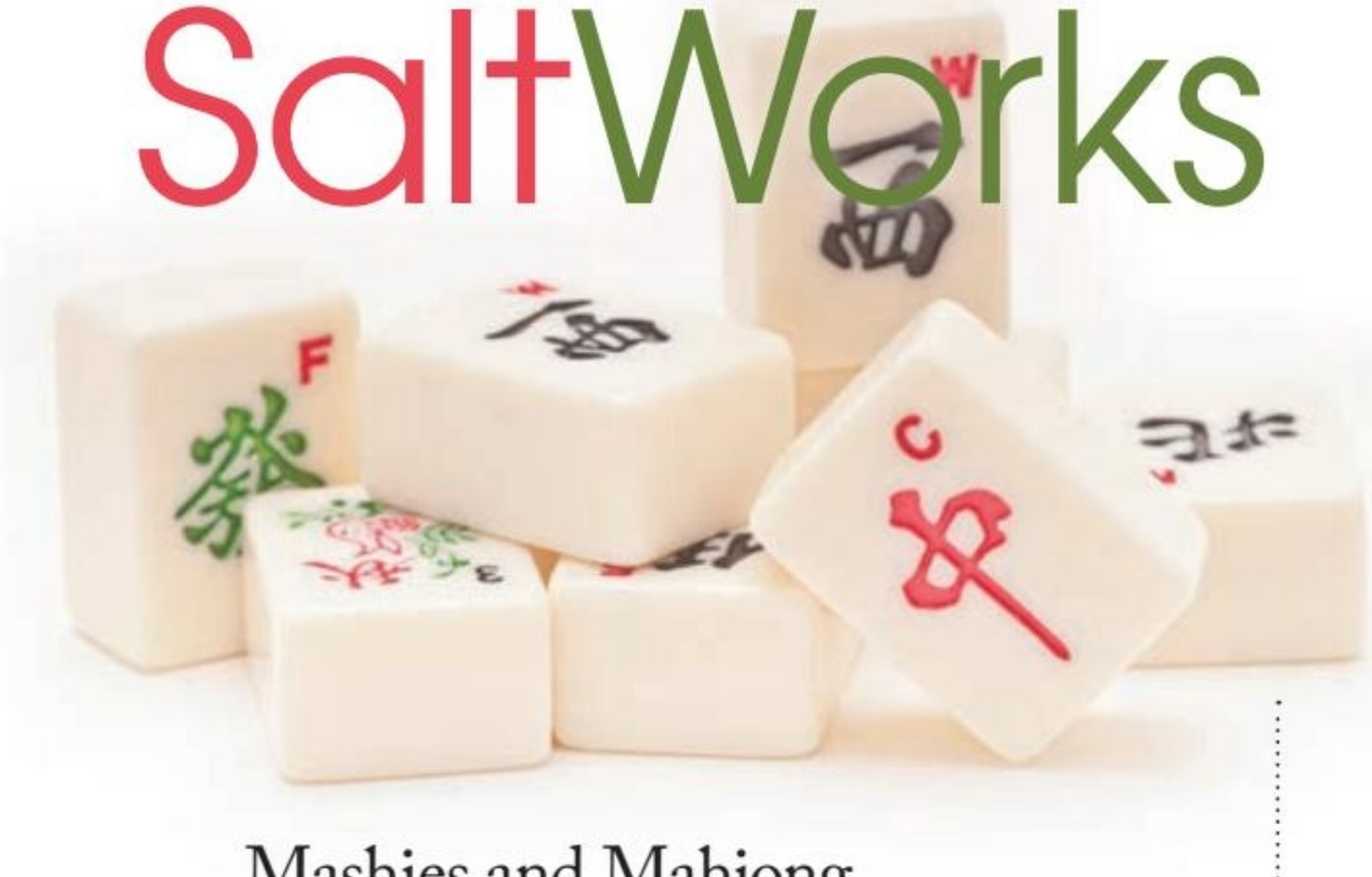


Mashies and Mahjong

The Brunswick County Golf Tournament and Games Day offers something for everyone — both the sedentary and the golf-inspired. Golf takes the form of a four-person scramble format, which includes 18 holes of golf and dinner. Games include bridge, mahjong, Mexican train and poker, with lunch and dinner. Proceeds benefit the Good Shepherd Center, which assists the hungry and homeless and foster a transition to housing. Tickets: $35-$100 per person. Oct. 7, 11 a.m.- 6 p.m. Magnolia Greens Golf Course, 1800 Tommy Jacobs Drive, Leland. For info: (910) 763-4424 or goodshepherwilmington.org.

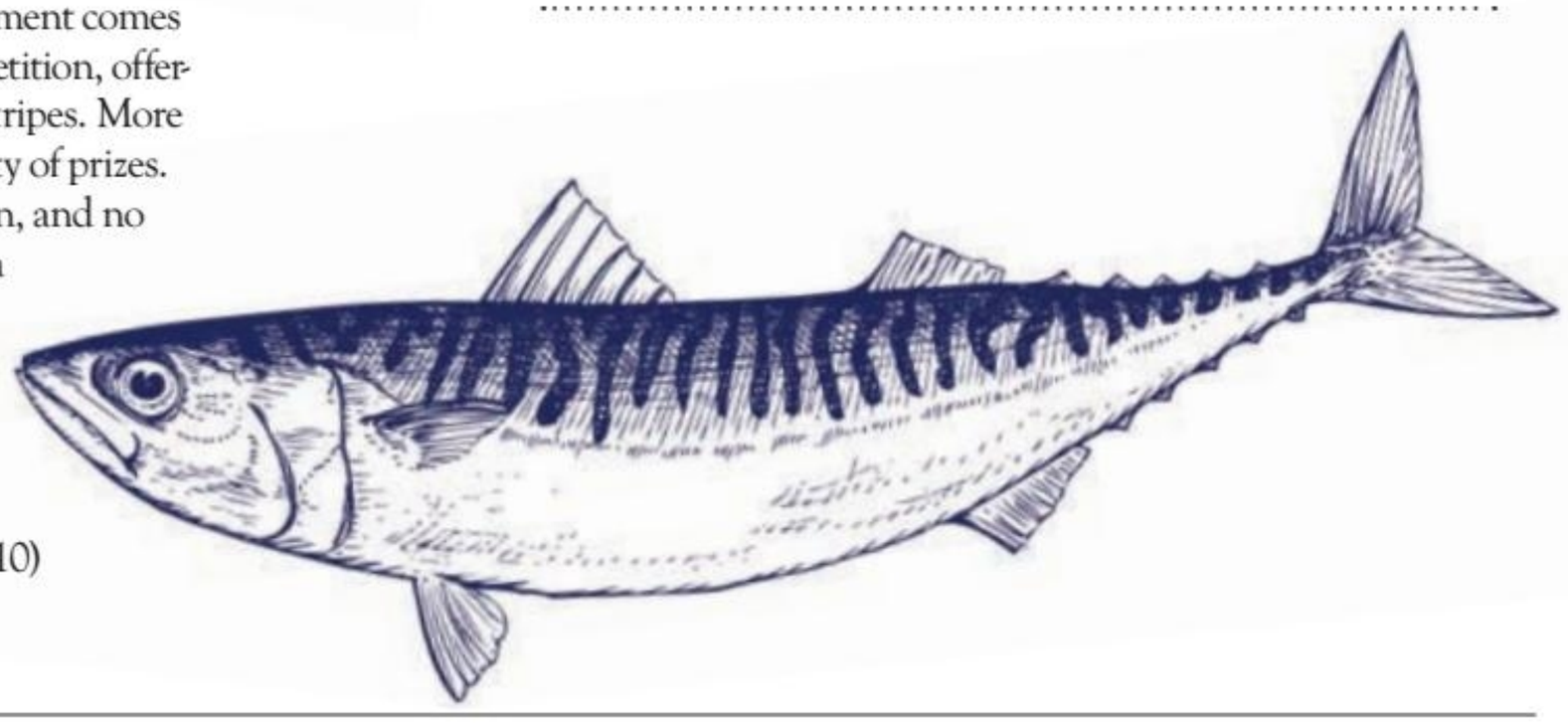
King of the Sea

The U.S. Open King Mackerel Tournament comes to Southport for this 41st annual competition, offering big-money purses for anglers of all stripes. More than 400 boats will compete for a variety of prizes. Each boat must have a registered captain, and no more than six lines can be fished from a boat. Admission: $340 per boat. Free for spectators. Online registration open until Oct. 1; on-site registration Oct. 3 from 10 a.m. to 12 midnight. Southport Marina, 606 W. West St., Southport. For info and registration: (910) 457-5787 or usopenkmt.com.

Thoroughly Modern

The Cameron Art Museum hosts its 2019 Modernism Gala, a black-tie dinner and auction that celebrates the upcoming Modernism exhibition at the museum, which opens to the public on Oct. 22. In addition, CAM will honor visionary artists and advocates including San Francisco art collector Louis Belden, whose recent bequest of 180 Modernist prints to the museum will be the subject of the exhibition "The Eye Learns: Modernist Prints from the Belden Collection." Among the other honorees: Larry Wheeler, longtime director of the North Carolina Museum of Art; philanthropists Ann and Jim Goodnight; American chef and author Vivian Howard; and Durham architect and photographer Phil Freelon, whose work will be the subject of an exhibition opening the night of the gala. In addition to dinner and dancing, there will also be a raffle and a live auction of special art, travel and dining experiences. Tickets begin at $500. Oct. 19, 5-9 p.m. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 395-5999 or cameronartmuseum.org/gala.

RICHARD DIEBENKORN, OCHRE, 1983



Gourmet for a Cause

The Ministering Circle has promoted health and wellness programs in Wilmington for more than 130 years. The group's "Red Apron Gourmet Sale for a Cause" will take place on Oct. 19, offering many delicacies for sale, among them homemade casseroles, ham biscuits, soups, cheese straws and pepper jelly. There will also be a raffle. Last year the group raised more than $100,000 for health and wellness programs in the Cape Fear region, as well as nursing scholarships at UNCW and Cape Fear Community College. Admission: Free. Oct. 19, 10-11:30 a.m. Elks Lodge, 5102 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. For info: theministeringcircle.com.

Waccamaw Pow Wow

Come celebrate tribal traditions at the 49th annual Waccamaw Siouan Pow Wow at the tribe's ancestral grounds in Bolton, North Carolina. The two-day event will include American Indian dance competitions (inter-tribal, freestyle and exhibition), drumming contests, and gospel singing with more than $14,000 in prize money. There will also be workshops for students about Native American culture with classes in American Indian beading, corn-husk doll making, and storytelling. Tickets: $8. Oct. 18, 9 a.m.-12 a.m; Oct. 19, 9 a.m.-12 a.m. Waccamaw Siouan Tribal Grounds, 7239 Old Lake Road, Bolton, NC. For info: (910) 655-8778.

Back Door Kitchen Tour

Residents of Old Wilmington (ROW) is a nonprofit neighborhood association devoted to the beautification and preservation of the city. This year's Back Door Kitchen Tour lets you take a peek inside nine houses in the historic district. Docents will be available at each site to answer questions and give a history of the property. Tickets: $30. Oct. 12, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Various locations in the downtown historic district. For info: (919) 637-9410 or rowilmington.org.

Upscale Design

Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity's UpScale ReSale and Design Challenge features rooms from local interior designers with a twist: They must use items that have been donated to the ReStore and repurpose them into stylish vignettes. All the items are then made available for resale to benefit the organization. Prizes are awarded for most creative rooms. Tickets: $5-$40. Oct. 11, 6-9 p.m.; Oct. 12, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Coastline Convention and Event Center, 501 Nutt St., Wilmington. For info: (910-696-9800 or capefearhabitat.org/upscale-resale.

Fire in the Pines

Halyburton Park is the setting for the annual Fire in the Pines Festival, which highlights the importance of controlled forest burning — a necessity for rare plants and species that depend on fire to survive. In addition to a demonstration controlled burn, this family-friendly event will feature live animals, scavenger hunts, representatives of more than 40 environmental organizations and a visit from Smokey Bear. Admission: Free. Oct. 12, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 341-0076 or fireinthepines.org.

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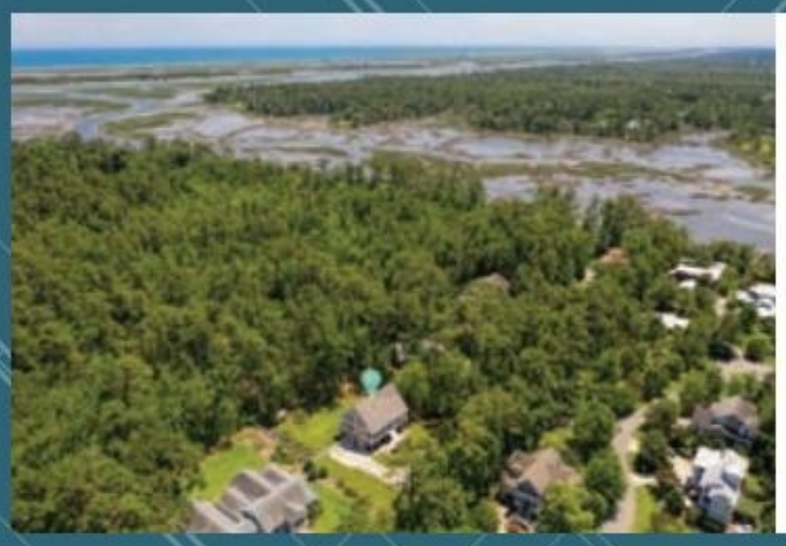

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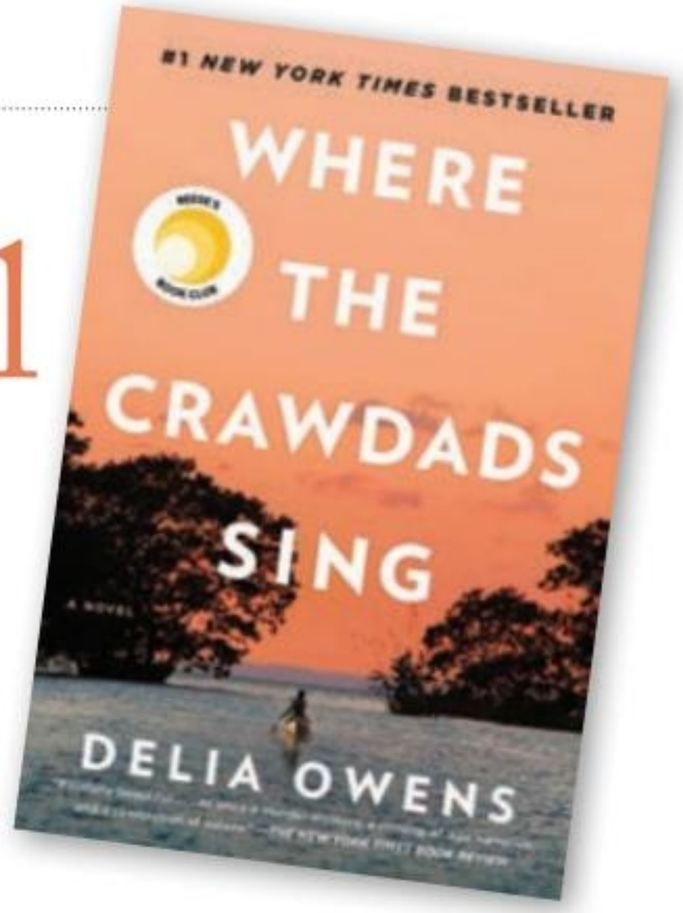
Making of a Marsh Girl

Praise for a North Carolina tale



By D.G. Martin

For almost a year now, Delia Owens' *Where the Crawdads Sing* has been at the top of *The New York Times* best-seller list, usually at No. 1.

North Carolina likes to be first at everything. Freedom. Flight. Basketball. Books. So, some of us have been bragging because *Crawdads* is set in North Carolina. Most of the action takes place in the fictional coastal town of Barkley Cove and the surrounding marshes, coves and ocean waters. There are side trips to real places such as Greenville and Asheville.

Others complain that the book's geography is confusing, that the main character is unbelievable, that the framing of the African-American characters and their dialect is faulty, and that the storyline is broken and contrived.

However, the book's many fans argue that *Crawdads* is genuine literary fiction in light of its strong and lovely descriptions of nature's plants and creatures. They continue with praise about the book's compelling murder mystery that has an unexpected ending and gives readers a superior entertainment experience. They applaud the coming-of-age story of the book's central character, Catherine Clark, or "Kya."

Kya was abandoned by her family as a child and lived alone in a shack in the marshes miles away from town. People in Barkley Cove think she is weird, keep their distance, and call her "the Marsh Girl." She spent only one day in school and cannot read or write. However, because she is smart and diligent, she learns about the nature of the marshes.

When Kya meets Tate Walker, a young man from Barkley Cove, he senses her strengths and shares her love of plants and animals. He teaches her to read and write. They fall in love.

When Tate leaves Kya behind to study science at UNC Chapel Hill, she is devastated. Later, she rebounds to the seductive charms of Chase Andrews, a town football hero and big shot. Their secret affair is interrupted by Chase's marriage to another woman, and Kya is again distraught.

Overcoming these disappointments, Kya leverages her reading, writing and self-taught artistic talents to record the natural world that surrounds her. When Tate, now a scientist, returns to her life, he persuades her to submit her work for publication. The book is a great success, and she writes and illustrates several more.

All this is background for the story that begins when Kya is grown and her former lover, Chase Andrews, is found dead at the bottom of an old fire tower. Kya is a suspect and is ultimately charged, arrested, put in prison and tried for Chase's murder.

The evidence against her seems flimsy at first. But incriminating facts pile up, including her angry response to the married Chase's attempts to seduce her. But she has a strong alibi. The author's deftness in setting up this situation, and resolving it smoothly, has helped make it a best-seller.

A remaining mystery is how and why Owens, the author of two successful non-fiction books about the African natural world, came to write *Crawdads*.

After studying and writing about animal behavior, as she explained on UNC-TV's *North Carolina Bookwatch* in September, "I wanted to write a novel about how much we know about how animal behavior is like ours. It can help us learn about ourselves. So I came up with this idea of writing this novel about a young girl who is forced to live outside of a social group. She's abandoned. She's never totally alone, but she has to spend a lot of time alone, and how does that affect her behavior? That is the question of my novel. Because Kya doesn't have any girlfriends, she is missing something. She's lonely, she's isolated, and when people are forced to live in that sort of situation they behave differently.

"Kya was raised in the wild coastal marsh of North Carolina. She was born in the 1940s and lived through the 1950s and on, and so I chose the marsh because she is mostly abandoned by her family. She has to live most of the time by herself. I wanted the story to be believable, and the marsh is a temperate climate so she could live, she didn't have to worry about snow or freezing, and she had a shack. She could survive because you can truly walk around and pick up mussels and oysters. I know it's not easy, but you can learn to do it. It was possible for her to survive in that environment. That's the reason I chose it."

Owens, who spent much of her life in the wilds of Africa, far from any other human, explained, "There's a lot of me in Kya: girl, love of nature, live in the wilderness for years, feeling like I don't belong anywhere. There's a lot of me in Kya, but there's a lot of Kya in all of us."

She says that being totally alone changes a person. "When I was isolated in Africa all those years, I wanted to have social groups. I

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wanted to have more contact with people. But when I came back, I found out it's not so easy just to do it. And that's what happens to someone who's isolated like Kya. She longed to be with people, but every time she had an opportunity she was shy and didn't feel socially confident.

"One of the points of the book is that you do not have to live in a marsh to be lonely. A lot of people in cities are lonely. A lot of people in small towns, even though they have friends, are lonely because we don't have the strong, long-lived groups that we used to have. And when we get away from that, not only do we feel less confident and lonely, but we also behave differently toward others."

How does Owens make a story out of an isolated young woman who lives in a shack in the marsh?

"I came with the theme first. I wanted to write a story of a young girl growing up alone and how isolation would affect her, but I knew I couldn't just write that story. It had to have a love story, and it's a very intense love story. It's a very compelling, I hope, murder mystery. Of course when Kya reached adolescence, she reached the time that she wanted to be with other people, she wanted to be loved. So she started in her way reaching out, at least watching, and there is sort of a love triangle that follows that is very intense."

Will there be a movie? *Crawdads* gained the attention of actress Reese Witherspoon. Fox 2000 has acquired film rights and plans for Witherspoon to be the producer.

We can hope that the movie will be shot in North Carolina. But here the book's problem jumps up. The geography described in the book, with palmettos and deep marshes adjoining ocean coves, seems to fit South Carolina or Georgia coastal landscapes better than North Carolina's coastlands.

Nevertheless, whatever the moviemakers decide, North Carolinians can bask in the reflected glory of a No. 1 best-seller that claims our state for its setting.

D.G. Martin hosts North Carolina Bookwatch *Sunday at 11 a.m. and Tuesday at 5 p.m. on UNC-TV. The program also airs on the North Carolina Channel Tuesday at 8 p.m. To View prior programs go to http://video.unctv.org/show/nc-bookwatch/episodes/*

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The Third Person Project

In search of Wilmington's buried and forgotten past

By Wiley Cash · Photographs by Mallory Cash

As his 2011 essay collection *Pulphead* makes clear, John Jeremiah Sullivan possesses the inestimable skill of sifting through American popular culture to separate the bright, shiny things from the timeless ones. The seemingly divergent essays in the collection ricochet between a hilarious yet stirring portrait of the Tea Party movement circa 2009, a deep dive into the origin myths surrounding Guns N' Roses' frontman Axl Rose, and meditations on loneliness, identity, and what is perhaps the most American trait of all: our Protean ability to recast ourselves in different renditions throughout our lifetimes. With this in mind, Wilmington, a city that is always revising and reinventing itself, is the perfect place for John Jeremiah Sullivan to live and work.

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Brightmore of Wilmington
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www.brightmoreofwilmington.com

On Labor Day, John and I spent a few hours on his back porch, and, over a couple of appropriately named Long Weekend IPAs from Kinston's Mother Earth Brewing, we discussed Wilmington's frustrating history of not only shedding the past, but also burying it. Of course our conversation began with the most violent and shameful event in the city's history: the race massacre of 1898, which is, to this day, the only successful coup d'état in American history, and something the city largely ignored for over a century. As John puts it, here in Wilmington "our identity is based on something we can't talk about." But John has joined a legacy of writers and thinkers who are willing to research and talk about 1898. From these various investigations and discussions has sprung the Third Person Project, a group of citizens, scholars, students and researchers who are dedicated to scouring the past to uncover Wilmington's missing and buried moments.

I ask John how the Third Person Project got started. He takes a moment to consider the question, and I imagine his mind cycling back through reams of microfiche and dusty pages of reference books and telephone directories that had been left hidden in basements and tucked away on bookshelves across the city.

"It grew out of the projects that make it up," he finally says, the first of those projects being *The Daily Record* project, in which a group of scholars and local eighth-graders searched for editions of *The Daily Record*, an African-American newspaper that was thought lost to time after white marauders destroyed the printing press in 1898. The group found seven copies of the newspaper, and they scanned them and published them on their website.

"The experience of finding those newspapers and studying them gave us a sense of how thick the wood is here, how much there is to drill," John says. "Wilmington has an unusual amount of lost history."

Nowhere is this lost history more apparent than in Wilmington's African- American life and culture. Take jazz musician Percy Heath, for example. Born in Wilmington in 1923, Heath was a bassist who played alongside icons like Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie, and was a member of the iconic Modern Jazz Quartet. While it is popularly believed that Heath grew up in Philadelphia, John informs me that Heath did not permanently

leave Wilmington behind after the move north. He would return to Wilmington throughout his young life, a fact either glossed over or altogether absent from jazz history.

"Percy Heath played in the marching band at Williston," John says, his voice edging toward an exasperated laugh. "And he was the class president! Every rock you turn over in Wilmington has a story like that."

Another story is that of Charles W. Chesnutt, an author who was born in Cleveland and raised in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and who, by the turn of the 20th century, was the most celebrated African-American writer in the country. His seminal work, *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901), is probably the best-known fictional portrayal of 1898, even though its portrait of white terrorism effectively ended Chesnutt's career.

Because Chesnutt spent his adult life in Cleveland, scholars have long wondered why he chose to fictionalize the events of 1898, especially because doing so exposed him to critical peril. It has been assumed that Chesnutt's childhood in Fayetteville and his ties in eastern North Carolina are what made the events of 1898 so important to him, but John has found a more direct connection: Chesnutt's uncle was a man named Dallas Chesnutt, who left Fayetteville and settled in Wilmington in 1876. Dallas Chesnutt forged a career as a postal worker, but he also had a second career as a printer. What did he print? It turns out he was the printer of *The Daily Record*, the newspaper the white mob set out to destroy by burning Dallas Chesnutt's printing press in 1898. John argues that Charles Chesnutt's interest in Wilmington's coup d'état was not simply historical, cultural or political; it was deeply personal.

John points out that the 1898 race massacre was not the beginning of Wilmington's attempt to unwind the positive changes brought about by Reconstruction. He recently discovered that the Confederate memorial statue in Wilmington's Oakdale Cemetery is one of the very first, if not the first, Confederate statues in America, erected only a few years after the end of the Civil War.

Considering the milestones in Wilmington's racial history — the erecting of what could be the nation's first Confederate monument, the 1898 race massacre, the battles over integration, and the Wilmington Ten — John argues, "If it's possible to be the anti-conscience of the South, Wilmington is, but we can reverse the polarity of that." He smiles and looks into his backyard, the weight of what he has just said seeming to settle over him, the clouds that presage Hurricane Dorian not yet on the horizon.

"But that may be the thing I love most about Wilmington," he says. "People who live here now can take a hand in it. I have a funny feeling that what happens in Wilmington — when it comes to the political destiny of the South and this country's struggle with racial equality — somehow it matters what we do here."

Wiley Cash lives in Wilmington with his wife and their two daughters. His latest novel, The Last Ballad, *is available wherever books are sold.*

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The Tomato's Last Hurrah

Summer's carefree days have drawn to a close, but much of the bounty is still with us. Now's the time to use up every bit of the tomato's goodness

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES STEFIUK

By Jane Lear

When I was a child, no one I knew cooked pasta (what we called noodles) with tomato sauce at home. In our part of the South, that sort of food was considered not just ethnic, but positively exotic, enjoyed as a special treat at the lone Italian restaurant in town. So although a college roommate introduced me to Ragú — we both thought it was pretty good — I didn't have what you might call a relationship with tomato sauce until I moved to New York City in the late 1970s.

By sheer good fortune, I landed a job at Alfred A. Knopf, the legendary publishing house, and among the luminaries who graced the halls was Marcella Hazan, author of the instant classics *The Classic Italian Cook Book* and *More Classic Italian Cooking*. (Both books are combined in *Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking*, published by Knopf almost 20 years later.)

Mrs. Hazan's recipe for Tomato Sauce with Onion and Butter, from the first book, is at once devastatingly simple and life-changing. Aside from pasta and cheese, it lists just four ingredients: tomatoes (fresh or canned), one onion, five tablespoons of butter, and salt. That recipe, which is easily available online, has long been famous for being a gift to home cooks everywhere; periodically, it is rediscovered and wins a whole new fan base.

I made tomato sauce the Marcella way for years. Eventually, though, I branched out, impelled by curiosity and the fact that during the end of tomato season, God will strike me dead if I let a single soft-ripe heirloom go to waste. That's how I found out that a sauce gets complexity and a good balance of acidity and fruity sweetness

from a mixture of varieties, and those juicy heirlooms were more interesting to play with than the pulpier plum (Roma) types.

The basic sauce below is extremely versatile — it's what my husband and I reach for when making pasta and pizza. It's wonderful drizzled over flat fresh romano beans, a slab of meatloaf, or polenta. And it seems to taste even better when made with the last of the year's tomatoes. I freeze as much of it as I can because the jar in the fridge will be gone in no time flat.

By the way, the key to a great tomato sauce is the right pot. You want something heavy-bottomed, to discourage scorching, and with a wide surface area, to aid evaporation. The less time the tomatoes spend reducing, the fresher and more immediate the flavor will be.

A few personal asides on tomato prep: Some people like to peel and seed tomatoes before making sauce; others feel it's more efficient to toss everything into the pot, then pass the cooked sauce through a food mill to get rid of the gnarly bits.

I generally prefer doing the work on the front end, but unlike many folks, I don't blanch the tomatoes in boiling water first. Instead, I plunk them in a bowl, pour a kettle of boiling water over them and make myself a cup of tea while I'm at it. By the time I've gotten a sieve organized over another bowl, the tomatoes can be eased out of the hot water one by one; with a little help from a paring knife, the skins slip right off.

When seeding tomatoes, first cut them in half crosswise — around the equator — exposing the seed pockets. Use a finger to loosen the seeds in each pocket, then empty the tomato halves over the sieve.

To save every drop of the juices, I don't chop the tomatoes on a cutting board, but instead in my hand, over the sieve. My tool of choice is a Dexter Russell oyster knife; the straight-edged blade is dull yet can still get the job done, the rubber handle is grippy in a wet hand, and the curved, rounded tip is ideal for flicking errant seeds out of the way. The chopped tomatoes go in the bowl underneath, and once you've pressed hard on the solids in the sieve, you can toss them into the compost pail knowing they've given their all.

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protocol
ELEMENTS FOR GOOD LIVING

Late-Season Tomato Sauce

Makes about 1 1/2 quarts

I've never found my finished sauce to be overly acidic, so it never occurs to me to add any sugar, but I'm no purist: It all depends on the tomatoes. If your sauce tastes harsh, add a little brown sugar to taste. Lastly, inspiration here comes from Marcella Hazan, but also the late Giuliano Bugialli, who taught me that basil isn't used in a tomato sauce for its own flavor, but to bring out the flavor of the tomatoes themselves.

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 large yellow onion, chopped
3 fat cloves of garlic, minced
Several sprigs of fresh thyme, marjoram or winter savory, tied together with kitchen string
5 to 6 pounds soft-ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded and roughly chopped, plus their juices
Coarse salt
1 or 2 fresh basil sprigs
A little unsalted butter, if desired

1. Heat the oil in a large, wide, heavy-bottomed pot over moderately high heat until it's hot. Add the onion and cook until it begins to soften, then add the garlic. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion and garlic are thoroughly softened (don't let them brown).

2. Add the tied herb sprigs, the tomatoes and their juices, and a generous pinch or two of salt. Simmer the sauce, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until it thickens nicely, about 1 hour. Taste the sauce and adjust the seasoning. Remove the herb sprigs.

3. After the sauce is done, add the basil sprigs, simmer the sauce an additional 2 minutes, then remove the basil.

4. Stirring in a little butter at this point will round out the flavors in the sauce and give it finesse, but it's by no means necessary. I like a fairly chunky sauce, but if you prefer something smoother, purée it in a blender. Let the sauce cool completely, uncovered, before refrigerating or freezing.

Jane Lear, formerly of Gourmet *magazine and* Martha Stewart Living, *is the editor of* Feed Me, *a quarterly magazine for Long Island food lovers.*

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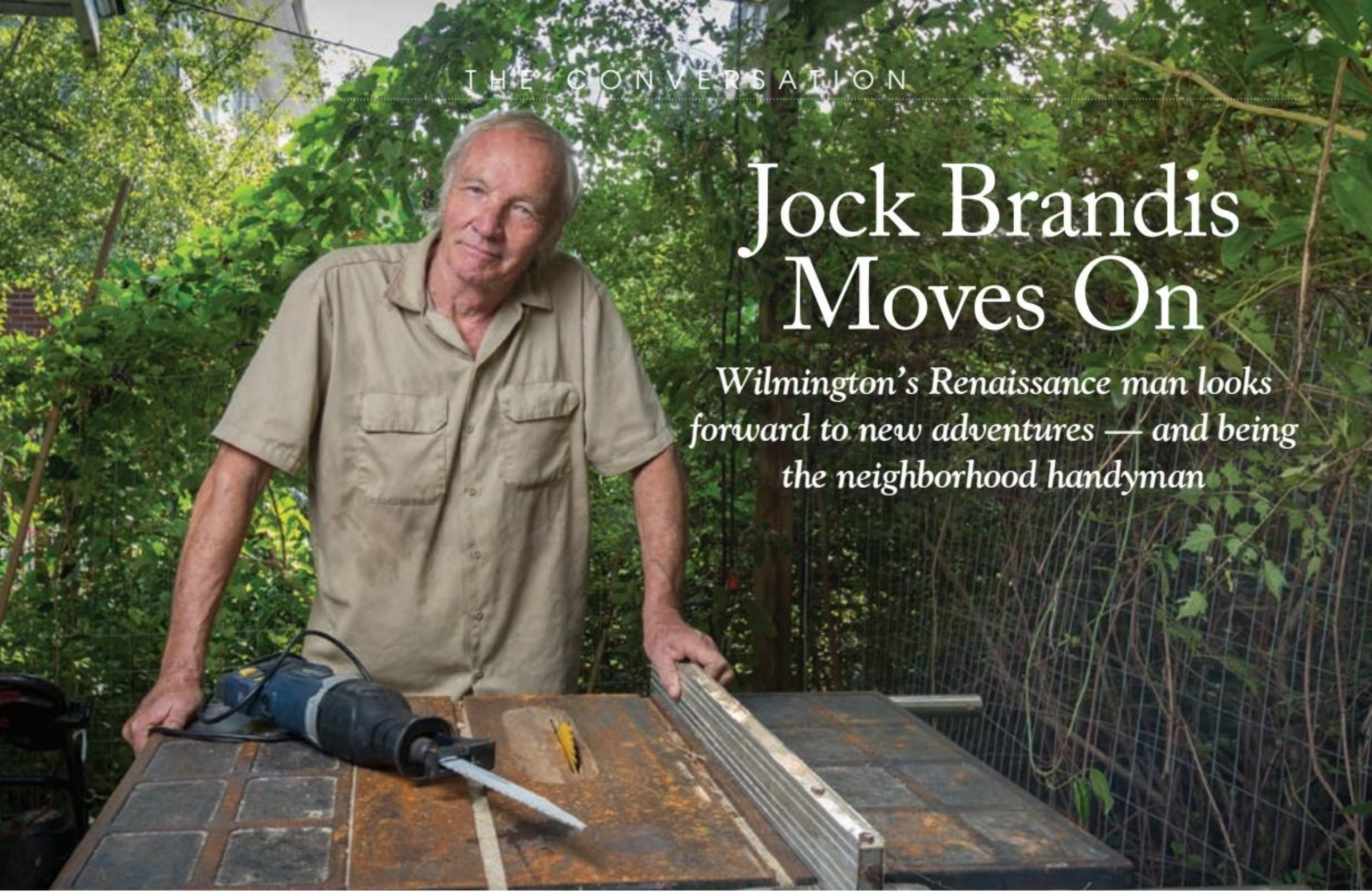
Jock Brandis Moves On

Wilmington's Renaissance man looks forward to new adventures — and being the neighborhood handyman



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

By Dana Sachs

Jock Brandis

A lot of people will know you as the co-founder of the Full Belly Project, a Wilmington nonprofit that has helped reduce hunger around the world, in large part due to a product you invented, the universal peanut sheller. We'll get to that later, but how would you describe yourself?

I was born in the Netherlands and raised on a farm in northern British Columbia. After university, I joined the Canadian version of the Peace Corps. I taught school in the worst slum in Jamaica for two years. That kind of radicalized me. And then I went off with (the charity) Oxfam to join the Nigerian Civil War.

You evacuated children from the conflict zone, right?

From Biafra. You never want to get involved with an African civil war, and you never want to get involved with the losing side, because the losing side is infinitely more depressing than the winning side.

What discouraged you?

I realized that we probably made the situation worse. We stretched the war out for an extra year. I ended up writing a book about it called *The Ship's Cat*. It's a "futility of war" book — lots of people do "futility of war" books. If you're going to write a book at the end of a war, it had better be about futility. If it isn't, it's not an accurate book.

How did that experience affect you?

I came back determined that that was the end of my do-gooder stage of life. I was going to go to Hollywood and get into the movie business and hang around in hot tubs with movie stars. That became my life's ambition. I started doing big-budget movies in Toronto.

Did you like the movie business?

For a young man, it's a totally fun game. And that's where I met Dino De Laurentiis, and he brought me down here to Wilmington to help set up the movie studio. That was 1984. And I stayed.

You worked on a lot of horror movies — *Blood and Guts; Drop Dead, Dearest; Funeral Home*. As a lighting director, you must have had to solve a lot of technical problems. Can you describe one?

The movie was called *Alien Encounters*. We had to make flying saucers fly — with no budget. I got a very large piece of glass and I mounted it on a system so that this piece of glass could move in three directions, with a joy stick. And then I mounted small flying saucers on that. They looked like they were flying around. Back then, people used to hang their flying saucers on wires. If you mount it on glass, you don't see any wires.

How do you feel when you're presented with a problem like that?

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THE CONVERSATION

Why did you leave the film business?
My wife got sick. I had two small children and she got cancer. She spent five years dying, basically. I couldn't be on someone else's schedule anymore. I had to be there to feed the kids. So I set up a business to build specialized electrical generators for the film industry. That allowed me some freedom. If there was a crisis, I could drop everything and run home.

That's the ultimate problem-solving.
It is. I got spectacular support from this community. I don't think there's a place in the world that would have supported me better than Wilmington.

What brought you back around to Africa?
I still had the ghosts of the Nigerian Civil War in my head. A friend joined the Peace Corps and went to Mali. She sent me a letter saying, "This little place is absolute paradise. Can you come and help us fix a solar electric water system?" All I'd ever seen of Africa was horror. Now maybe I could see an Africa that wasn't, so I got on the plane.

And that was when — I get into trouble by making promises I can't keep, and then I have to keep them. So, when I was leaving this village, I saw women shelling peanuts by hand. Their fingertips were bleeding. The head of the women's group asked me to find a peanut-shelling machine and send it back. I said, "Absolutely." But I came back to the States and couldn't find it. So I had to invent one.

What is the intellectual process you go through to solve a problem like that?
I am a Fail Early, Fail Often guy. If I can try something and it fails in four hours, that's more efficient than if I try something and it fails in four days.

It sounds like science.
Science is much more deliberative. I just quickly knock stuff together and fail. And then I knock something else together and fail a little less. Every time I do it, I fail a little less. It goes very quickly.

This is a great lesson.
With young people, I say, "This is going to be a failure. It's going to be highly embarrassing.

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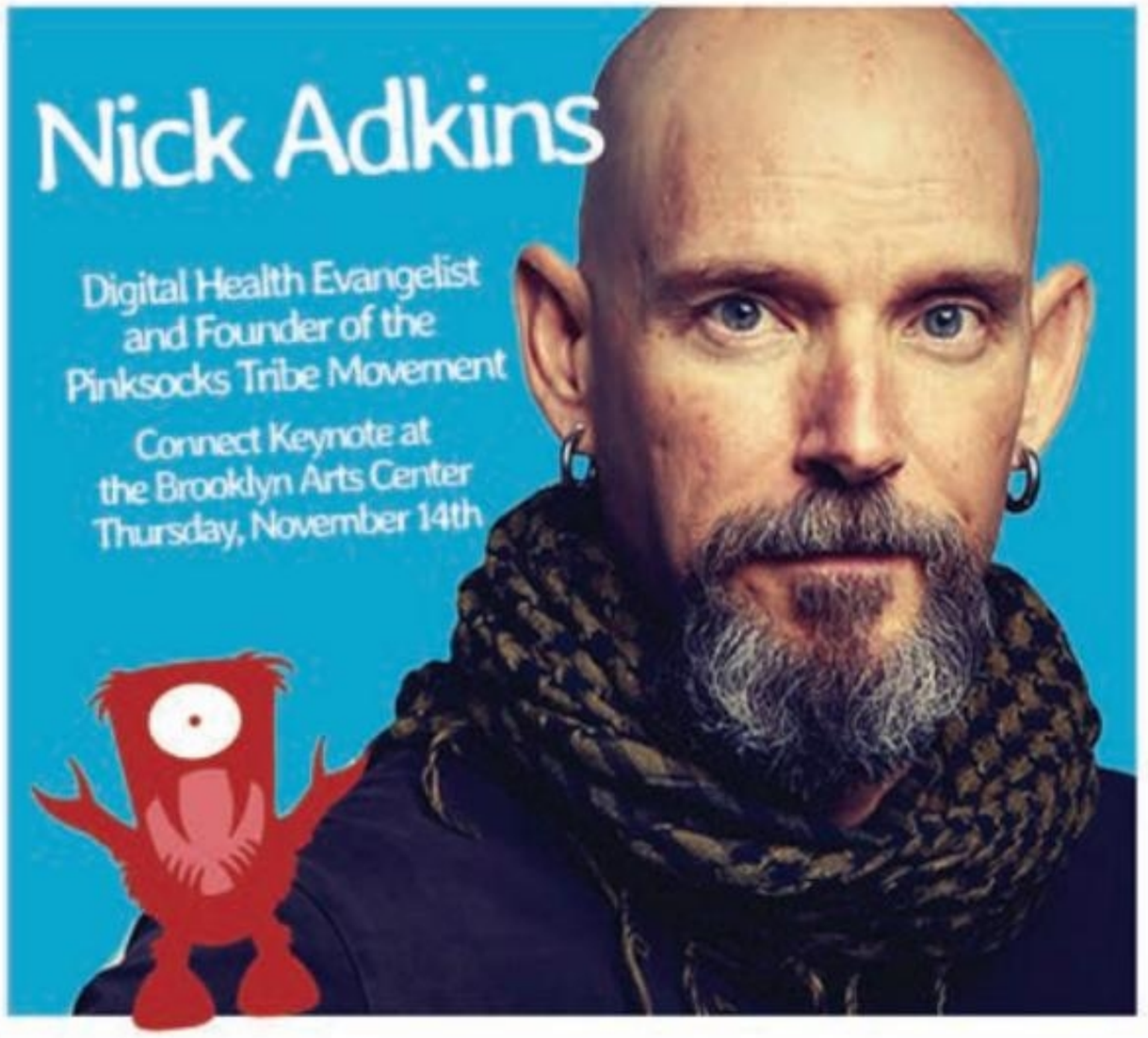

We're all going to laugh at ourselves." The motto is: "Fail early. Fail often. Fail better. And fail in a very public way."

Why publicly?

Because that way you'll get a lot of interesting input. If I'm trying something out in Africa, I do it in the market, when everyone is around. People give you 20 different ideas. Fifteen will be totally stupid. Two or three will have some merit. And two of them will be total genius.

Your universal peanut sheller has been adapted throughout the world, and the Full Belly Project emerged out of that. After two decades, though, you left Full Belly earlier this year. What happened?

If you're the co-founder of an organization and you get a lot of freedom, you develop some bad habits. It didn't work well as a hierarchy. I was the lowest guy on the totem pole. Things worked well when I had a lot of freedom to move the direction of invention and to choose the projects with our team of volunteers. Then a new board of directors and executive director wanted to take over this function themselves. Once it started to unravel, it completely unraveled. I was let go and all the volunteer programs were shut down.

What's next for you?

The core of the old Full Belly volunteer team — our retired doctors and engineers — have come back together. And we're on hemp. Growing hemp is an exploding business in North Carolina now, but all they're doing is growing it for the seed and oil. They leave all the fiber behind in the field. We want hemp farmers on the old tobacco lands to get more money from their crop.

The Full Belly website said that you had retired, but it doesn't sound like you've retired.

I was going to retire at 75. I'm 72. When I really retire, I'll just be the neighborhood handyman. Tell everyone I will fix their bird feeder.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores, online and throughout Wilmington.*

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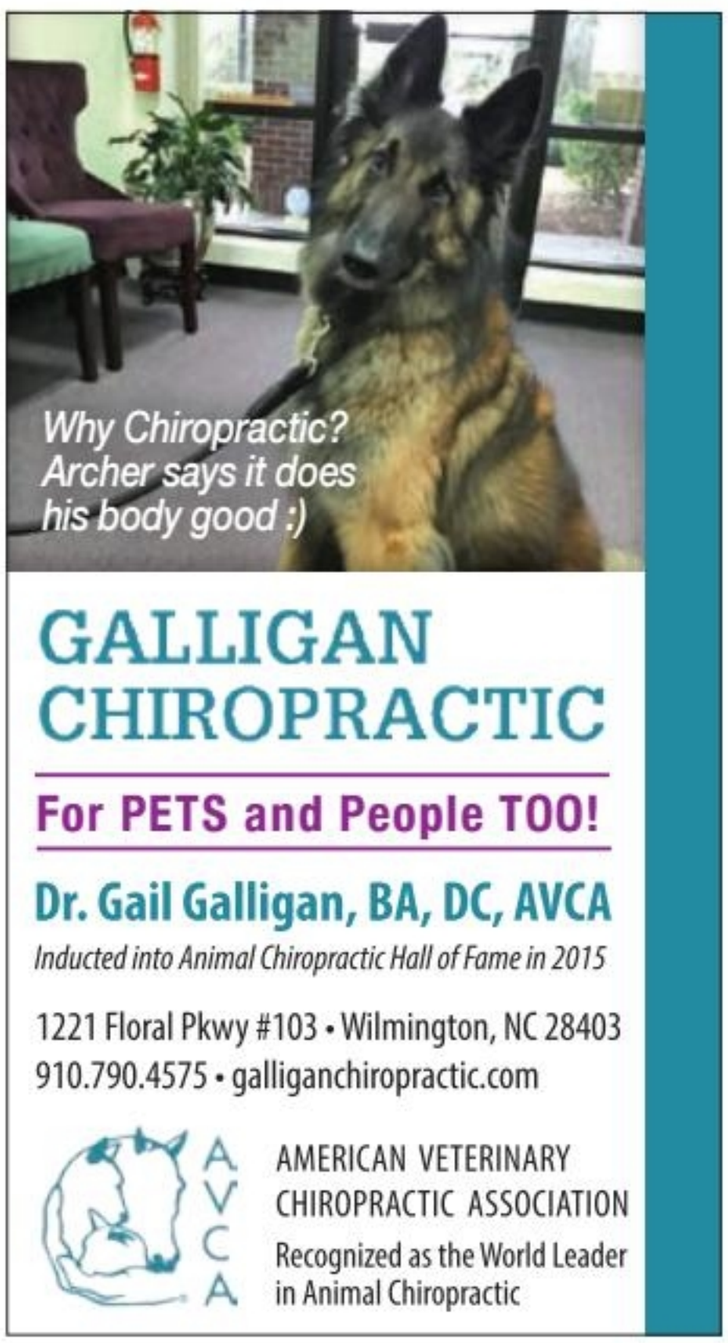
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An Imperfect Year

When pruning a limb from the Tree of Life, good friends are just what the doctor ordered

By Amy Lyon

Ten years ago, I was diagnosed with breast cancer after having recently moved to Wilmington from Massachusetts. Over the next year, I divided my treatment between Boston, where I went for lumpectomy surgery, and Wilmington, where I underwent chemotherapy and radiation. Wilmington embraced me in ways I never expected, making me one of its own. I kept a journal during that imperfect year and turned it into a memoir. What follows are excerpts from my story.

November 12:

It's a balmy autumn day, and I've just picked up an old friend at the airport who has flown in for the Cucalorus Film Festival, when my cellphone rings. I pull over, since it's probably Dr. Elizabeth Weinberg with the biopsy results.

"I'm very surprised," she says. "It's a small tumor. You're going to be fine."

I hear the words, but they don't penetrate. I don't know what to feel. I've never received news like this. I have breast cancer. My worst nightmare had come true. I'm far from home and sick.

November 13

Jonathan (my husband) and I go to see Dr. Weinberg. In the waiting room colors are brighter, noises are louder — everything looks and feels different from when we were here last week. Normal is no longer normal. Dr. Weinberg defines tubular breast cancer as "old-lady cancer, which is a good thing because it's treatable and slow-growing."

Did she just call me old?

She has other good news. Because I'm well-endowed, if I have a lumpectomy it should hardly be noticeable. I shouldn't even need reconstructive surgery! Reconstructive surgery? What? I'm in shock.

November 15

I dive headlong into the film festival, traipse from Thalian Hall, to Jengo's Playhouse, to the stately Masonic Theater and Level 5 bar with its sweeping views of the Cape Fear River.

My new state feels surreal, as if it is all just a movie. Take 1: Camera pans over a healthy-looking 50-year-old on a bar stool, hair flowing in the breeze, phone balanced on her shoulder, foot swaying, as she scribbles recommended doctors' names in the margins of a colorful Wilmington tourist map. Almost every movie mentions cancer.

November 17

Jonathan and I sit on Wrightsville Beach under a Carolina blue sky eating tuna tacos. Surfers slice through curling waves. A squadron of pelicans glide in formation. I drag my hand through the fine sand.

If this cancer goes untreated, I'll die. Even if treated, I might still die.

I call Patricia, who's 10 years breast cancer-free. Patricia's got both sides of the Mason-Dixon in her, a Southerner by birth with a mother from Boston; she's got that Southern graciousness with a shot of Northern directness. With a reassuring voice she lists all the reasons why I'm going to be OK.

Cucalorus is over. No more slouching in darkened theaters. While I walk home from the last movie, a friend drives by. She beeps, rolls down her window.

"Hey!" I bellow, "I'm going to be away for a while! I have breast cancer!" I sound like I'm leaving for a Caribbean cruise.

January 15

We are back in Wilmington after surgery and six weeks of recovery at my brother's home in Boston. I feel like I'm in a museum of where we used to live, who I used to be. There's a deep comfort in being home. I wake early and it flutters inside, this gladness. I feel it as we amble along the Riverwalk. The river churns quietly, shadows of tall grasses undulate on its surface. A lone duck paddles by. I drive for the first time since surgery, up Oleander past a line of massive magnolias, deep green waxy leaves swaying.

January 28

Sandra and Alex, her miniature Schnauzer, are visiting. Sandra is another of Wilmington's new gifts. She rang my bell holding a quiche from Jester's Café and now checks in on me regularly. I stroke Alex's silky gray hair; my spirits lift.

We met Dr. John Anagnost, my oncologist, an energetic man with kind eyes and a quick smile. Even though recent studies have shown that four chemotherapy treatments are probably as effective as six, he's not yet convinced. Six it is then — one every three weeks.

February 3

Steve runs the salon out of his antebellum home on Chestnut Street. Sandra and Alex bring me to get my hair cut, less to fall out during chemotherapy. As an act of solidarity, Sandra also gets a pixie cut. She's quite handsome with her salt-and-pepper do. Steve's mother had breast cancer — twice. He won't let me pay him. It's about the people (and the dogs), isn't it?

February 4

A cadre of friends has offered to make meals, led by Stephanie, who has been in Wilmington for 20 years, originally from Worcester, Massachusetts, like my father's family. She feels like family. I'm learning how to say thank you, to receive, since I'm in no position to give back. I'm surrounded by unconditional giving.

February 5

I'm in a recliner in the chemotherapy infusion room, drugged on Oxycodone and Ativan. The IV is attached to the port in my arm. The nurse starts the drip of drugs. So it begins.

February 6

I feel like a poisoned blowfish. Stephanie drops off a meal. Sally brings flowers and tells me that no matter what happens I'm going to be OK. Sandra comes over. Alex sits in my lap.

February 16

I've emerged from the brambly thicket of chemo 1. We picnic at Fort Fisher on a windswept peak where Civil War soldiers once stood guard under the scrub pines. We're sentries searching for our future.

February 18

I think of this experience as a pruning of a diseased branch on my tree of life. There's a simplified sense of priority and focus — only one problem to solve, ridding my body of cancer.

February 27

It's three days after chemo 2. The stubbly ends of my hair are falling out. Everything tastes like soap. My neck and upper body are tender to the touch. I'm dizzy and my head feels full of fuzz. I mix up my words. My body feels like wet concrete.

Pam, a soft-spoken woman with a wild artistic brush who paints dreamscapes, delivers salmon and roasted vegetables. Four years ago she had ovarian cancer.

"I was amazed how loved I was," she says. "It changed me, softened me. I haven't forgotten."

Downtown at the Village Market I buy *The New York Times*. Majoub's son recently had cancer. He tells me to smile, pray, eat local honey, fresh ginger, and garlic.

March 7

Cancer treatment is a mix of science, art, intuition and luck.

March 8

Chemo brain is real. I start a thought and it trails off. One idea morphs into another. It hurts to think.

April 6

The azaleas are blooming. Daylight lingers till 8 p.m. Windows are thrown open. We eat at Jester's Java, pimento cheese sandwiches and

sweet tea. Half the neighborhood is there. Spring!

May 20

I'm in the chair for chemo 6. The moment I sit down, I relax. Brittany attaches the lines to the port in my arm. I'm teary with relief. This day is an ending.

June 1

We meet Dr. Patrick Maguire, my radiologist. I'm to have 30 blasts, 23 on my breast and collarbone, and seven directly on the cancer site. When we emerge from the meeting, I'm riled up from all this talk of life and death and of neutrons that will be shot into my body.

A coastal storm blows. Metal gray clouds ruthlessly shove the white billowy ones out to sea. A maelstrom of rain and thunder runs over Wilmington, punctuated by streaks of vertical and horizontal lightning. It wets the wetness of the sea, mats the manes of dogs, matches the mood of my soul.

June 21

A team of technicians create a rigid plaster mold that I'll lie in during radiation treatment. I'm on my left side, head turned to the left, right arm draped over right ear—a Greek goddess in repose.

My hair's sprouting! I spend a great deal of time rubbing the fuzz, luxuriating in its sheer presence.

June 28

With the help of two technicians, I squirm to fit into my mold until the red crossbeam from the machine lines up perfectly across my breast. To relax I count. One Mississippi, Two Mississippi, Three Mississippi . . . Treatment takes a very long 10 minutes.

July 28

Every day at the clinic I whip out my breast as if it's a hand to shake. I'm tired of this. My breast is too. Seven more to go.

August 11

For the very last time, I walk past the monitors, down the hall, into the treatment room. I cozy up in my mold. The technicians line me up. The machine kicks on and I hear the familiar buzz of neutrons shooting into my breast. Enter me. Heal me.

"You're done!" the technician announces.

In the dressing room I rip off the purple robe and cry. On my way out I'm handed a bouquet of purple, blue and white balloons.

Jonathan and I drive to the beach. The ocean's calm, transparent. We stand in the surf, cool on our feet. I unwind the ribbons from my wrist and release the balloons. They bounce along on invisible waves of wind, up, up and away. The blues recede, shrink, until only tiny specks. Then, nothing.

"Make a wish," my husband says.

That's easy, I think.

"Please, God, let it all have worked."

Amy Lyon is the author of The Couple's Business Guide, How to Start and Grow a Small Business Together, *and a cookbook,* In A Vermont Kitchen. *She works in sales at Merriam-Webster, Inc. To read her full memoir, contact her at amylyon@gmail.com. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.*

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Spirits in the Hall

A close encounter of the spine-tingling kind at historic Thalian Hall

By Chris E. Fonvielle Jr.

I believe in ghosts! I believe in ghosts as I encountered one.

There, I said it. Some of you may chuckle, scoff or say something like "pshaw," but I am not kidding. I saw an apparition that can only be described as a ghost.

I grew up hearing my mother talk about the ghosts of Thalian Hall in historic downtown Wilmington, North Carolina. Jane M. Fonvielle was a talented stage actress who often performed in plays there, including *Anastasia*, *Dial M for Murder* and the *Thalian Follies*, in the 1950s and 1960s, and then helped lead the historic theater's preservation movement in the 1970s.

My mother was not alone in experiencing supernatural occurrences at Thalian Hall. Many folks associated with the theater in those days — Ruth Caplan, Hester Donnelly, Claude Howell, Henry MacMillan, among others — experienced strange things and sightings that they could not explain. Whatever walked there, however, did not walk alone. People reported occasionally seeing the specters of two men and a woman in the gallery or near the back of the arena.

I often accompanied my mother to play rehearsals and performances at Thalian Hall. It is a magnificent theater designed by John Montague Trimball, a prominent New York architect, in the 19th century. Of all the opulent playhouses he built in New York, Cincinnati, Charleston, Richmond and other cities, only Thalian Hall remains open and in use.

Construction of the building, which still doubles as City Hall and performance hall, began in 1855. The theater opened to great fanfare with two plays, *The Honey-Moon* and *The Loan of a Lover*, on Oct. 12, 1858. It seated 1,000 people, one-tenth the population of Wilmington, the largest city and seaport in the state at the time. Over the past 161 years, Thalian Hall has hosted many renowned entertainers, including Maurice Barrymore, Buffalo Bill Cody, Edwin Forrest, Catarina Jarboro, Joseph Jefferson, Lillian Russell, Agnes Morehead, John Phillip Sousa and Tom Thumb.

Talk of Thalian Hall being haunted intrigued me. If spirits walked there, I wanted to see them. About two weeks shy of my 16th birthday in May 1969, I asked my mother to take me to see the ghosts, if they really existed. Access to the theater, she replied, could only be gained through Tatum Robertson, president of the Thalian Association.

When I phoned Tatie, she readily agreed to take me and four of my

equally curious friends — Bill Cameron, Sam Eckhardt, Kent Raphael and Tom Saks — the following Sunday afternoon.

As we entered the building through the back stage door, "Tatie" cautioned us that the ghosts did not appear on demand and were more than likely not to be seen. Enough natural light filtered in through cracks and under doors of the old building that our eyes soon adjusted, enabling us to walk around without bumping into seats, stage props or each other.

Tatie gave my friends and me a brief history of the theater as we passed through the arena and the lobby, its walls lined with photographs of actors and actresses who had performed there. After making our way to the first gallery, she pointed out the area where the specter of the woman was usually seen. We then carefully ascended a narrow, darkened staircase leading to the top balcony, which had been off limits to theater-goers for years, as it was in a state of disrepair.

We eventually came back downstairs, disappointed that we had not encountered something supernatural. But standing in the foyer of the lobby looking toward the stage, our group suddenly sensed an eerie presence nearby. It took no distinct form, more of a glowing light, but it was definitely something we were aware of. Even so, it was too undefined to convince us that it was a ghost, and it slowly faded from view.

Our intrepid band of ghost hunters made its way back to the stage and prepared to leave the theater. Before our departure, Kent realized he had dropped his hat in the top balcony and, accompanied by Bill, went back up to see if he could find it. Sam, Tom, and I sat down on a sofa on-stage to wait for them. Soon growing anxious about Kent and Bill, Tatie thought it best to check on them. She descended a small flight of steps at stage right, walked in front of the orchestra pit, and then turned up the

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arena's center aisle that led to the lobby.

As she passed the second row of seats on the right-hand side, I saw a man stand up from the second seat, and step into the aisle. He quickly turned his back to us onstage as he followed Tatie so closely he could have touched her. I have no idea where he came from, but I discerned a tall, slender figure wearing a frock coat and knee-high boots in the Edwardian style. I watched in silence as Tatie and her ethereal escort walked to the lobby, where she turned left and he right and out of sight.

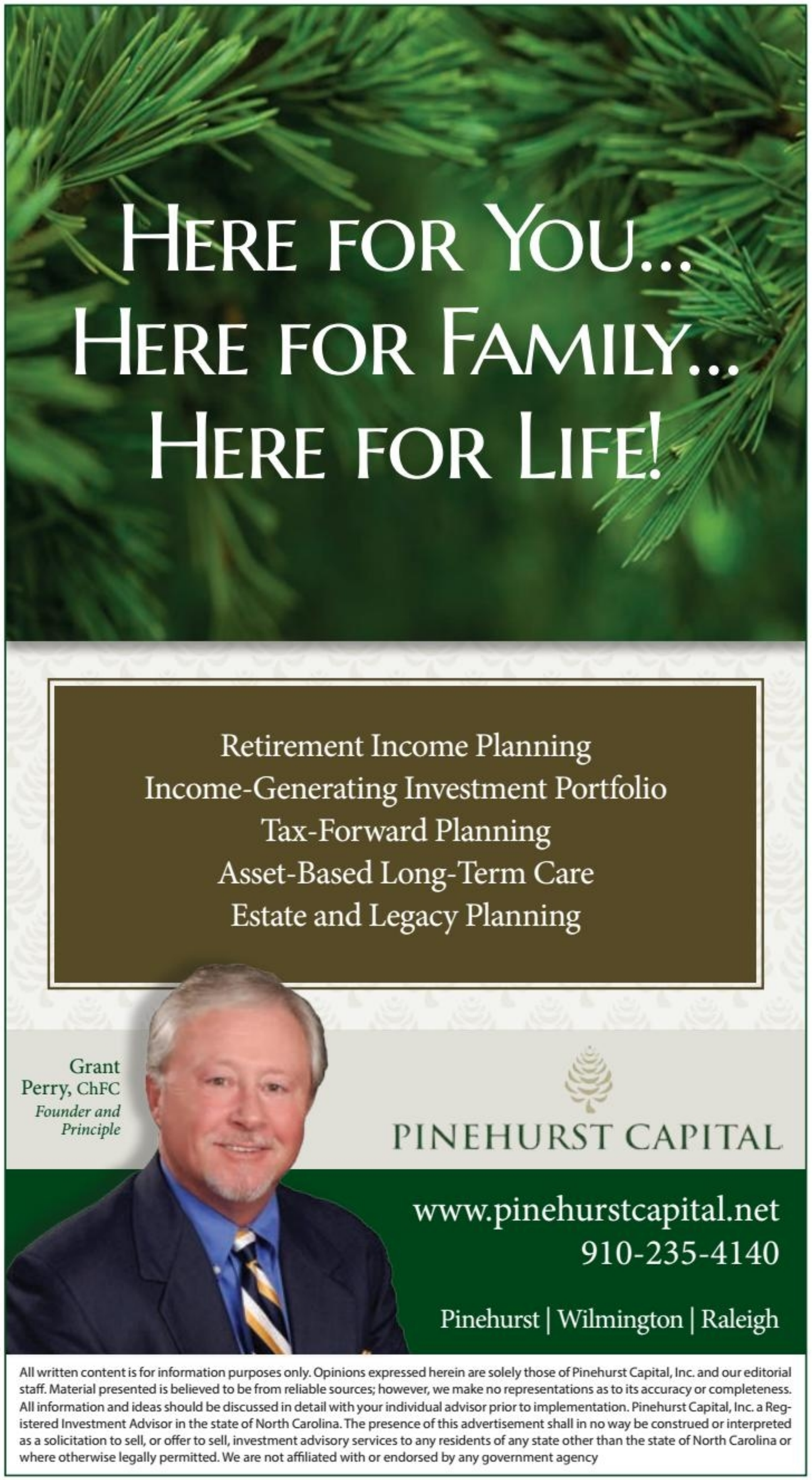
When the macabre experience ended within a matter of 15 seconds or so, I began laughing hysterically. So did Sam and Tom, both of whom described exactly what I had witnessed, whatever it was. We agreed that the encounter was more than a visual sighting, though. It was surreal, spine-tingling, indescribable. We called out to Tatie, who quickly returned to the stage with Kent and Bill in tow. When we told her what we had seen, she replied that she had never even sensed the specter's presence. "The ghosts were friendly," Tatie recalled before her passing in 1996. "They did things to help us in the theater, and sometimes they just wanted to watch."

Exactly what I encountered at Thalian Hall all those years ago I do not know. A forlorn spirit from the dimension of life after death? The residue of energy from a past event activated by environmental conditions? Something that slipped through a vortex in a parallel universe?

I have attended many performances at, and led many of my UNC Wilmington classes on, tours of Thalian Hall since that fateful day in May 1969, but I never saw another ghost. Perhaps there is a rational explanation for my singular supernatural experience in the wonderful old theater, but nothing I have come up with in the past 50 years makes sense. I can only say with certainty that my senses encountered something strange that day I cannot explain.

I hope it stays that way.

Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle Jr. is professor emeritus in the Department of History at UNC Wilmington. A Civil War and Cape Fear historian and author, he is the recipient of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine for distinguished service to the State of North Carolina.



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Peregrine Falcon

The return of a legendary predator

By Susan Campbell

As the mercury begins to fall, it is time to keep a sharp eye out for the return of a consummate avian predator, the peregrine falcon. This handsome fast-flyer can be found worldwide in a variety of habitats. During winter months, we are lucky enough to find them along the North Carolina coast.

Readily recognizable, peregrine falcons are large raptors with long, pointed wings and a long tail. Adults have barred underparts, whereas immature birds are streaked. Both, however, have steely upperparts and a dark head with noticeable "sideburns." Peregrines tend to be solitary outside of the breeding season, likely due to the large territory they require for foraging.

Also known as "duck hawks," peregrine falcons hunt medium-size birds such as ducks (surprise, surprise), terns, gulls and larger shorebirds. Individual falcons dive from high perches with wings folded to catch unsuspecting prey, a technique called stooping. During such dramatic pursuits, these birds easily reach speeds of 75 miles per hour. Labeled as world's fastest bird, peregrines have been clocked as fast as 200 miles per hour stooping from half-mile perches.

In the summer months they can be found breeding on the tundra, on cliff ledges and man-made structures such as churches and skyscrapers. Pairs of peregrines return to the same sites for breeding season, raising three or four youngsters each year. In cities, peregrines take advantage of the endless supply of pigeons and starlings to feed their growing families, but they will pursue whatever sizable bird-prey is available.

Peregrines — the name comes from the Latin word for "wanderer" — are also known for having one of the longest migrations of all birds. Those that breed on the North American tundra have been tracked to southern South America in winter. Peregrine falcons can cover more than 15,000 miles a year; some travel over the open ocean as they migrate down the East Coast.

Most notably, the peregrine falcon is the subject of a real success story. There was a time when these birds could not be found anywhere in North Carolina or even this region of the United States. As a result of the widespread use of the pesticide DDT, the eastern population was virtually driven to extinction by the middle of the 20th century. In 1970, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service declared the peregrine falcon an endangered species. Given the broad national interest in this species, intensive work to reintroduce peregrines began at Cornell University. Effective captive breeding techniques and release procedures known as "hacking" developed rapidly. Thousands of birds were hacked at hundreds of sites and, as a result, the species was de-listed in 1999.

By the mid-1980s, young birds were hacked at several remote sites in western North Carolina. After 20-plus years, peregrines were once again gracing the sky. Monitoring of the breeding population by state biologists continues. This summer, five of the 10 occupied sites had successful nests, which hosted a total of 14 young. Believe it or not, this includes the Wells Fargo building in downtown Charlotte, where the resident pair has been nesting for three years.

In the winter around here, peregrines may perch high on telephone poles, pilings or simply on a dune line. Should you see flocks of shorebirds or gulls suddenly explode into flight, look carefully for a large falcon in their midst: It just might have an unsuspecting individual in its talons. There's nothing like witnessing one of these amazing birds in action.

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos. She can be contacted at susan@ncaves.com.

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A flash of yellow
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and another
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winging their way
once again
to southern warmth.

Do they know
they are fleeing
for their lives?
Do they know
a single wing flutter
has the power
to create or destroy
a tornado far from
the wing.

Unknowing
unaware as their instincts
propel them on.

As I watch from my window
I wonder how each breath
I take or don't take
how each word I say
or don't say
affects someone
or something
somewhere in my world
or the next.

– Patricia Bergan Coe

Port City Paranormal

Rest uneasy. Wilmington's ghost hunters are on the case

By Kevin Maurer · Photographs by Andrew Sherman

It's 11 p.m. on a Saturday night in August, and Doug Anderson is standing in a tenant house at Poplar Grove Plantation talking to a ghost.

Or at least he hopes he is.

The meter in his hand that detects electromagnetic fields is pinging, and when he was in the house earlier it felt like someone was watching him as he set up an infrared trail camera. "Ever heard peanuts called goober peas?" Doug asks. A few seconds later, he thinks he can hear something. "It sounded like he said yes," Doug tells his team. "But I'll have to check the tape."

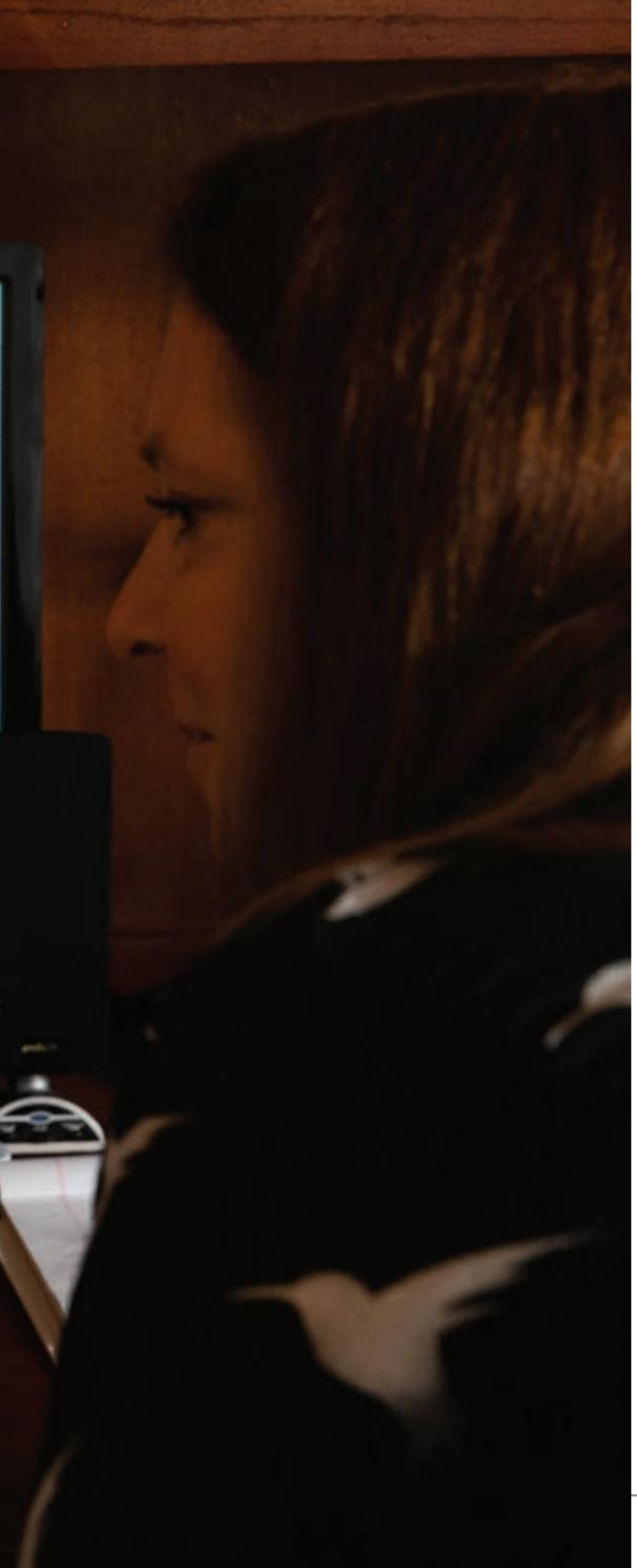
For more than a decade, Doug and Jane Anderson have investigated the paranormal. They head up Port City Paranormal (PCP). Founded in 2006, the group seeks to "dispel the fear and myth associated with unexplained activity by providing support and understanding to our clients, and the spirits we encounter."

Besides investigations at Poplar Grove, PCP has worked in local homes, downtown businesses and on the *USS North Carolina*. The couple have worked on the battleship so many times they know the spirits by name, and Jane even picked up an afterlife boyfriend named Inky. They've also investigated a shuttered insane asylum in upstate New York and a plantation house in Virginia Beach.

Sometimes they'll be called to a private house to investigate a paranormal event. But this isn't the Ghostbusters. The times they find spirits, there is not much they can do. "You can ask the spirit to leave, but telling a spirit to leave is a joke," he says. Ghosts are not evil, he adds. They're just people. "If you were an asshole when you were alive," Doug says, "you're going to be an asshole ghost."

But no matter how many times they talk with a spirit, one question is

SONY
SONY



never answered: What happens when you die? How does the spirit world work? It's a question that has plagued man since the beginning of time. Cultures have invented stories to explain the afterlife, but that is what keeps Jane and Doug investigating.

"I want to know what they went through," says Jane. "I want to know how it works. I want to know if there is something else. Can this happen to me? This is the key to the universe. Are we ever going to get an answer?"

The hunt in August is at Poplar Grove Plantation in Pender County, just off U.S. Route 17. The hunters arrive at 7 p.m. and unpack their gear. There are about 10 people in the group — including some hunters from South Carolina — and several new members of PCP. Jane, dressed in jeans, is the ringleader organizing the teams. She'll lead one team. Doug, in a black T-shirt, will lead the other. While Jane wrangles the hunters, Doug sets up a trail camera — used to capture wildlife — in the tenant house and fiddles with his still camera and audio recorder.

"There has been a lot of activity lately," Jane says as the group gathers in the house's basement near the cash register and gift shop. One of the hunters has a T-shirt with "Got Ghosts?" printed across the front.

Ghost hunting is a mix of "science and spirituality," according to the Andersons. Most of the hunters have an audio recorder strapped to their arm and a camera. The camera picks up spectral images. The audio recorder allows the team to pick up electronic voice phenomena (EVP). EVP are inaudible to the naked ear like a dog whistle, but get picked up by the sensitive microphones on the audio recorders.

"We love voices," Doug said. "That's why we ask questions."

Before the hunt starts, Jane hands me a K-II meter. The meter is gray and about the size of a TV remote. When energy is present, the lights fire, with red being the highest spike. It's the same kind of device used by electricians and cable installers to detect electrical wires.

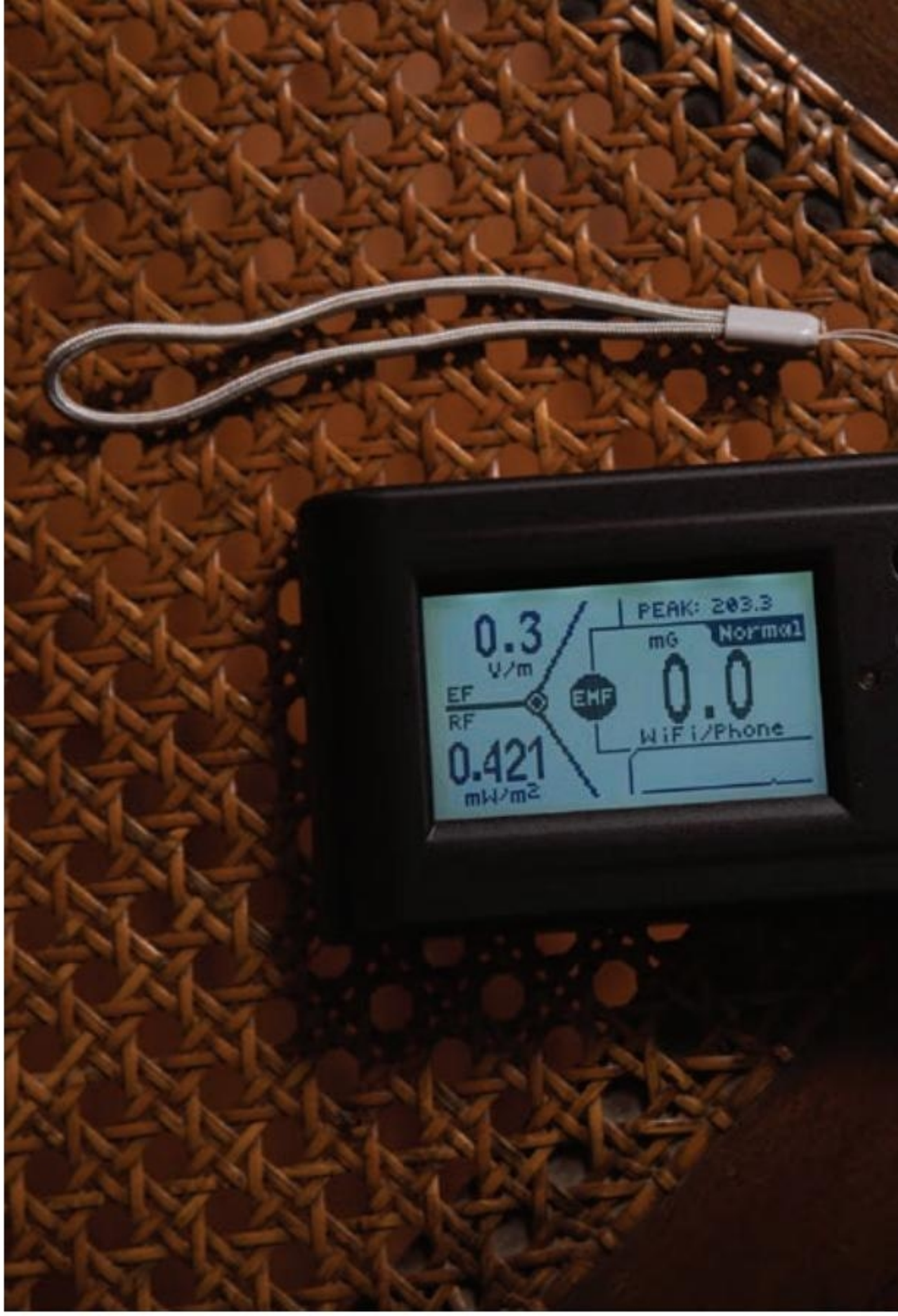
"Just hang on to this and yell when it gets red," Jane tells me.

The reason, Doug tells me later, is that spirits need energy.

"If they are going to materialize you usually get an EMF spike," he says.

Besides audio recorders and cameras, Doug has an infrared thermometer and a more advanced meter that can measure electromagnetic field shifts, which might be caused by a nearby electrical current, or possibly by something else.

The 10 hunters split up into two five-person teams. Team One stays in the house. Team Two heads out to the tenant house. I'm assigned to Team One under the direction of Doug. The hunt starts around 7:30. My team starts in the basement of the house and then heads upstairs to the third floor, working our way down slowly.



Ghost hunting is an investigation. The hunters fan out like a police CSI team. They videotape and photograph every inch of a room. "We take pictures to get the layout of the house," Doug says. "But I've accidentally caught stuff."

Doug shot a photo of a "full-body apparition" during an investigation in Virginia Beach. After the visuals are documented, Doug tries to make contact. Gathered in the sitting room on the second floor, he introduces himself: "My name is Doug," he says. "We've been here to visit before. Do you like us visiting the house?" The rest of the team stands silently around him. I look at my meter. Nothing. "Is there anyone here who would like to speak to us?" Doug says. "I'd really like to know who you are. Can you tell me your name?"

Doug's voice is soothing. He comes off like a therapist. His questions are sincere. He wants to build rapport. Between questions, he narrates what is going on in order to get a clear audio picture. When he stands too close to a clock or someone speaks, he makes note. When a truck rumbles past the house on Route 17, Doug stops talking to the ghost: "That is a truck going by."

He doesn't want to mistake a sound for something paranormal.

In the parlor, Doug learns that David Hiram Foy, the eldest son of Popular Grove owners Joseph Mumford Foy and Mary Ann Simmons Foy, passed away in the room. Foy was a recent graduate of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill who enlisted in the 41st North Carolina Regiment during the Civil War. He was only in the Confederate Army a few weeks before he contracted typhus and died in the manor house on June 12, 1862. He was 21.

Standing in the parlor, Doug tries to reach him. "David," Doug says. "Are you around? If you're not David, can you give us your name?" Nothing. The meters are normal. Doug tries again. "Who is the president of the Confederate States of America?"

Doug is careful not to provoke the spirits. They aren't here to confront them. "I don't expect the spirits to perform," Doug says. But in his attempts to reach David, Doug decides to at least stir up a debate. "This would be considered provoking," he says. "What do you think of Ulysses S. Grant?" Pause. Doug makes a point of letting the ghosts have a chance to answer his question. "What did you think of Stonewall Jackson?" Another hunter jumps in. "What did you think

of General Sherman?"

After an hour or so in the house, Doug's team switches to the tenant house. It's pitch black as we enter. The two-room cabin sits just behind the plantation house. The bedroom is small, with a bed. A table sits in the middle of the second room with a creepy doll in one of the chairs.

"I hope we're not disturbing you," Doug says as we enter the house.

Doug introduces himself again and asks for the spirit's name. All is quiet. After the team moves on, Doug returns to the tenant house and asks about the peanuts. Around midnight, the hunters take a break and fuel up on snacks, water and soft drinks as they lounge around the basement of the plantation house.

In the break room, Jane sits at a table talking about some of the reality TV ghost hunting shows. For the past several years, ghost hunting has found its way onto TV, fueling an interest in the field. But Jane and the other hunters are more skeptical of other hunters than they are of the paranormal. Jane says often TV ghost hunters aren't looking for the paranormal. They are hunting for ratings, meaning they are willing to stage paranormal events, which ruins the field for more serious researchers like her and Doug.

"What we're doing is looked at like a fraud," Doug says. "Pictures are Photoshopped, they say. But I don't know how they explain EVP, especially when we get information we didn't know about." On this particular night, however, the spirits are quiet.

"Doug's new electronic thing did a great job with the anomalous electrical readings," Jane says a few days after the hunt. "I think the tenant house was the only active spot the whole night." But none of the hunters captured anything on their cameras or recorders.

Even though Doug thought he got something in the tenant house, it didn't pass muster. "There was something in the audio, but I just couldn't make it out," Doug says. "I really had to alter it. It was faint. I had to boost the levels. It wouldn't pass for evidence."

But the quiet hunt won't keep Doug and Jane from asking life's unsolved question again and again because its only unanswerable until they get the right EVP.

Kevin Maurer is the author of nine books, including No Easy Day: The Firsthand Account of the Mission That Killed Osama Bin Laden. *He lives in Wilmington.*

The Haunting of Masonboro Island

Scary fiction

By Peter Viele

The gilded grey heron, kissed by the last glimmer of failing sun over the longleaf pines and live oaks of the mainland, soared silently across my bow and over the reeds of the marsh searching for prey in the ebbing tide. He found his final meal of the day scurrying just above the strandline. The ghost crab writhed in his clutches, unable to escape his fate upon being snatched by the bird's stealth. The heron returned to the perch of my dock and dismembered the poor crustacean.

Looking closely enough, one can see all manner of creature grappling for survival here in my winding, salt creek. That is, on most days.

The humidity of the day persisted until I got to planing speed out of the neck of my creek and onto the Intracoastal Waterway. The respite of airflow cooled my frustration as I accelerated.

It was my wedding anniversary: June 13. And, in lieu of standard date-night fare, my wife and I decided on an easy beach day with our young daughter over on our beloved Masonboro Island, followed by a bottle of wine and a movie night in.

Just across the water lay the unspoiled treasure of our own barrier island. Masonboro was always the primary choice for beach days despite myriad options within a short distance of our home. Sugary sand, virgin dunes, no cars and no buildings. The natural playground plays host to surfers, shell collectors, kayakers and boaters all seeking the same unspoiled experience. Getting to Masonboro Island was like going on a mini-adventure in and of itself. But with children, it was an expedition.

It was a lovely day of leisurely exploration and loafing about, finding only a few beachgoers in our own private section of the island. The southwest breeze that pervades much of the summertime days here kept the day comfortable as we played in the pristine, emerald green water. It had been a full day of salt and sun.

Yet, here I found myself returning to the island at 8:30 at night. I had demanded that my daughter double-check to make sure she had collected all her toys before making the Sahara-like trek back across the island to the boat at the end of the day. I would go on ahead to load up and get the engine running. She trailed behind with her mother. "Scruffy," her precious stuffed sleep-time buddy, who wasn't supposed to be coming to the beach in the first place, had stowed away. He never made it back on board.

Being the lovingly willing — and begrudging — father, I was now returning to search for the cherished Scruffy on the island. "Never leave a man behind!" I declared to my daughter as I tucked her in just earlier this evening, promising that I would return him safely after she was fast asleep.

I took notice of the now-apparent stillness as I cut across the Intracoastal, leaving the channel. It was odd. I had an unexplainable, unnerving sensation at the quiet. The final living creature I had witnessed was now surely settling soundly back at my dock after his crab buffet. There were no more boats left speeding about, and the wind had disappeared completely.

I sped past the channel markers that usually housed pelicans or cormorants — no one was home this evening. Out past the inlet and rock jetties, far out into the ocean, it looked like a front might be nearing. To my back, the sun had set. Pulling back the throttle as I neared the cove at Masonboro Island, as to not run aground in the ever-changing sand-spit that had begun to enclose the harbor, I slowly tilted the propeller up and motored into my usual nook just behind the jetty. Neighbors were turning on their lights, and the street lamps clicked into place as I looked over my shoulder across the inlet back to Wrightsville Beach. There was no moon. It was getting dark.

Setting the anchor was a careful business, as the last thing I wanted was to be dry-docked, at night, on my anniversary. The tide was swift and merciless and was still an hour from being fully low. I grabbed my trusty Maglite flashlight from the boat, hopped into waist-deep water and slowly did the "stingray shuffle" to shore. I found our trail and scanned back and forth for any sign of our fleece-lined — and now surely sand-filled — stowaway. No trace. The quiet disturbed me. No oystercatchers cackling. No black skimmers stalking the low sky. Even the cicadas and miserable horseflies seemed to have left for the evening.

I was still only midway across the island when, all of a sudden, the surf began to roar. The ocean had been all but flat the entire day with no systems to produce waves in the near-term forecast. June rarely brings anything more than a lapping of 1-foot side-shore ripples. The peculiarity of waves arriving suddenly and without source piqued my interest as I backtracked to our encampment from earlier in the day.

There they were, 6-foot waves, crashing into the sand, materializing from some phantasmic, unknown source. I only managed a faint sight of them from the final strand of sun rays collapsing behind me. A mysterious and foreboding fog bank was rolling in behind the waves and ushered in an immediately chilling drop in temperature.

I stood dumbfounded at the crest of the dune. I was back overlooking our daytime spot from my summit, where only a couple of hours earlier our beach chairs and wares were splayed about, roasting in the afternoon sun. I refocused and pressed the button of my flashlight containing fresh batteries. It illuminated the scene brightly where now only footprints and a crumbling sandcastle remained.

Piercing the night, a blood-curdling scream let out in the darkness from the obscured sea. My neck hairs jolted into defense, and I panned the flashlight in the direction of the cry. It sounded like a woman. My light flickered and went out completely. Oh, no; I could make out an outline crawling from the waves. It was a woman in an extravagant white dress! I could see her now as plain as day, and I rushed to her aide. She was pulling herself out on all fours, dragging herself from the sea's grasp.

"What in the world?!" I thought aloud. "Ma'am! I'm coming!" I yelled to her, running to her side.

Reaching for her hand she ignored my behest to assist.

"Ma'am! Ma'am!" She continued to ignore me. '*I mean, I'm trying to help you here*,' I thought.

She extended her hand to the beach behind me, reaching for someone, when another hand appeared from the darkness to her rescue. It was an older gentleman, in drenched, very archaic-looking formal wear. He appeared behind me from nowhere. There had been no one on the beach, to my knowledge, let alone a man with massive sideburns that connected to his mustache.

"Sir, what's going on here?" I emphatically inquired with my heart racing. He was just as rude as his female counterpart that he just fished out of the ocean, ignoring me as well.

Then more appeared. Fully clothed, trudging their regal — and soaking wet — fine evening wear out of the waves and onto the dry sand of Masonboro Island. '*Were they on one of those turn-of-the-century murder-mystery cruises or something?*' I wondered. I was perplexed. Not a word was uttered, only faint moaning and wailing that grew louder. My senses told me that things were not as they appeared, but I could not help but to continue to stare as though I was watching a train wreck.

The rough-hewn visage of another gentleman exiting the turbulent ocean revealed as he neared; not that he was unhandsome — he was stricken with a grievous affliction! The gore oozed from his face and the air was rife with putrefaction, not unlike a gutted fish that was baked in the sun for a couple of days. My jaw dropped in astonished horror as the fractal light cast upon them by the sliver of the moon told the full measure of their tale — they were all terrifyingly injured and dying. Limbs missing, gashes, contusions, but mostly, severe burns. My stomach turned.

"Wha . . . what happened? Who are you? Wha . . . what is going on?" My questions remained unanswered as I walked through the crowd of trauma.

Collectively, they made their way to drier sand following one of the fellow injured gentlemen carrying a now-illuminated oil lantern. His unique facial hair also seemed to be from some other time — a full white beard, but no mustache.

The spectral procession continued behind the lantern toward the dunes. I lost count of how many of them there were, and none would even make eye contact with me. Women, men . . . children. Shock overwhelmed my faculties. My eyes must have been betraying me.

A shimmering object glimmered brightly from the water just beyond where I was standing, diverted and entranced my attention from the spectacle. A clue to this ruination, perhaps? Just beneath the surface of the water lay a coin; I kneeled down to inspect it, as if hypnotized, as the whitewater waves rolled between my knees. It was a lovely mint coin with some sort of crest and the date of 1838.

I turned to shout at the strangers, "Hey!" when a large plank of wood washed in, bouncing off of my legs, knocking me over into the water. I stood back up and composed myself. It appeared to be a chunk of a ship transom with large capital letters emblazoned in gold leaf. I made out *PULASKI*. "Pulaski?" I thought aloud as I read it.

Then I recalled where I had heard that name before. *The Charlotte Observer* had just published an article about a steamship named *Pulaski* that had disembarked Charleston, headed for Boston, and sank 40 miles off the coast of southeastern North Carolina — taking with it some 100 souls.

The shipwreck had been recently found by divers. '*That's right!*' I thought. It happened on the night of . . . June . . . 13th . . . 1838. I swallowed my reckoning with an audible gulp and slowly turned to the apparitions who were now convalescing in the dunes above the main trail back to the cove. I could hear their chatter. They were

afraid. But I, more so.

I clenched the coin and turned to the jetty to make a silent escape, following the rocks back to the cove to avoid them. A firm skeletal grasp seized my arm. I froze in terror as I turned to find a disembodied arm reaching from a cloud, which had crept up on and was now engulfing me. An open palm of bone and ragged, decayed flesh slowly advanced. The coin I was clutching began to wildly shake, but not from the cause of my trembling hand. My instinct compelled me to place the coin in the rotten flesh. Clasping shut around the treasure, the hand receded into the mist and I was freed.

I took my freedom and ran as fast as my feet would carry me in the direction of the jetty. I knew it would take me back to my boat despite not being able to see 3 feet in front of my face. I only turned back to make sure I wasn't being followed. I could only make out a faintly glowing orb at the center of the illuminated silhouettes of the dead.

Tripping over my feet in the pillowy, soft sand next to rocks and heart beating out of my chest, I fought against my own fatigue for survival. I had to get off of Masonboro Island. Finally reaching the cove, my little 19-foot skiff was not where I had anchored it. It was loose, and beginning to be sucked beyond the harbor. Then, my eyes caught Scruffy. He had been at the trail entrance all along. Impossibly, I missed him on the first pass.

Annoyed, I nabbed the infernal snuggle buddy and darted as fast as I could through the knee-deep water, praying not to encounter a stingray — nor another specter — and lunged for my boat. Pulling myself aboard, I attempted to weigh anchor, only to find that my line had been cut. I was beginning to drift out into the treacherous Masonboro Inlet. Surfers, stand-up paddlers and kayakers attempt the passage regularly but as any local will tell you, you don't want to be caught paddling across the inlet when the tide is sucking out to sea, particularly on a new moon.

I couldn't get my keys out of my pocket fast enough. I fumbled them onto the deck, retrieved them, inserted them and turned the ignition, but did not find the usually gratifying hum. Nothing. The tide continued its interminable pull away from land. I was scared, frightened actually. Drifting rapidly out of Masonboro Inlet, I weighed my options in my racing, frantic mind. Do I jump and swim for the jetty? Scream for help? Blow my neon orange, $2.99 whistle? I never stepped foot on my boat without my cellphone, but in a hasty exit from the house for this unplanned quick trip, I had left it on my kitchen counter. I couldn't think. I didn't want to attract unwanted attention from the collection of the damned that I was now parallel with on the beach. Nor did I want to suffer their same fate with no engine, no phone and no anchor. Panic was setting in. There would be no one coming to tow me back home.

I looked back down at my controls and tried to calm myself. That's when I noticed my throttle was engaged forward. No wonder! I put the throttle back in neutral and tried to crank the engine one last time. Salvation! The four-stroke didn't let me down this time. Punching the throttle forward, I sped toward land. I considered stopping by the Coast Guard station at the south end of Wrightsville but I was too afraid to stop until I made it back to my dock. I looked over my shoulder every few seconds only to find a billow of mist reaching for me.

I blew through the No Wake Zone sign, twisting my skiff through my winding channel like I was a getaway driver, nearly running aground as I scraped the oyster beds that flanked my narrow passage. I slammed into my dock, stepped over the disemboweled remnants of the crab from earlier and tied off. There was no time for such frivolity as raising my prop, tying off properly nor any of my other typical, overly obsessive procedures. I ran for my bike and rode through the corridor of live oaks and creeping Spanish moss on the gravel and dirt road back to my house under the fading moonlight as fast as I could. The fog had now made landfall.

Exploding through my front door, "Babe, you are not going to believe . . . "

"*Shhh*. What took you so long? I started the movie already and . . . I ate all of the popcorn too," my wife replied, aloof to my plight. She was watching John Carpenter's 1980 classic, *The Fog*, a movie that scared me to death as a child. Great, I thought. I was in my own horror movie.

I rushed to the windows to confirm that nothing had followed me home. I breathed a sigh of relief. The aberrant shroud seemed to have lifted and the stars were shining again. I attempted to reconcile what I had just witnessed on the beach side of my favorite island. It couldn't be what my mind demanded it to be. Reaffirming myself that I was no longer in danger, my heart began to slow down. I was safe inside my home with my girls.

Dusting off Scruffy, I decided to complete my mission. Upon sneaking into my daughter's room, I tucked him safely between her sleeping arms, with her unaware of what he was just a party to. All was well. I crept out, unintentionally creaking the door hinge, waking her.

"You're my hero, Daddy! Was he scared?"

"Yes, baby, but he's home safe now."

I kissed her on her forehead, thankful that we were healthy and alive.

I walked out, and picked up my useless phone that still lay dormant. I thumbed through search engine results of "*Pulaski* Shipwreck" and confirmed my encounter. The salvage divers working the June 13th, 1838 wreck site had also confirmed that what they encountered was the *Pulaski* — just off of our coast. Then, I pondered the families that suffered such a horrible fate on the *Pulaski* shipwreck almost 200 years ago and my heart sank with them. I got to see them tonight, still wandering, still traumatized, still afraid. It turns out that the people on the *Pulaski* steamship were mostly affluent Southern dignitaries. Yet, no amount of money could have saved them from their fate. I knew they would have given it all away to see their loved ones one last time.

Joining my wife on the couch, I asked, "Can we watch something else?"

I don't know what happened on this June 13th. Was it my imagination? A hallucination into another plane of existence? An illusion projected from my own fears from watching horror movies at too young of an age? I don't know. Call them ghosts. Call them lost souls. Call my encounter whatever you want. But one thing is for sure, come next June 13th, we'll be celebrating our anniversary somewhere in downtown Wilmington, way across town. Come to think of it, maybe we'll just head to Asheville to celebrate instead.

Peter Viele is a writer and editor who lives in Wilmington. An avid surfer, he has just completed a murder-mystery novel set amid pharmaceutical corruption in Spain.

Halloween

All grown up

PHOTOS AND STORY BY VIRGINIA HOLMAN

In the 1970s, when I was little, I lived in a townhouse complex in coastal Virginia that was full of Navy brats. In those days, Halloween was fun but simple. Kids rummaged through castoffs from the sewing baskets to fashion a quick costume — cut two holes in an old bedsheet (solid colors were best, but florals were cheerfully tolerated) trim the bottom so as not to trip and voila, you were a ghost. If you were willing to plan a full hour ahead, a quick tour of the women's closets could yield a flouncy skirt and top. Paired with hoop earrings, a thick stripe of eyeliner and a teacup or a large snow globe, and you were a mysterious fortune-teller. Witches needed only a black dress, teased-up hair, a thick face-dusting of green eye shadow, and a wicked cackle. The cool kids often scored a long granny-square crocheted vest or a suede jacket with fringed sleeves — accessorized with a pair of groovy sunglasses and a flash of the peace sign; they were hippies worthy of Woodstock.

Our thrown-together costumes weren't artistic creations; they were simply a means to an end — a way to get the loot. We coveted Smarties, Atomic Fireballs, Charleston Chews, Lemonheads, Squirrel Nut Zippers, Bottlecaps and miniature Mr. Goodbars, but rolled our eyes unkindly at those who offered pennies, apples or dry-as-dust Necco wafers — treats that seemed more like tricks.

When I moved to North Carolina in the late 1980s, I was surprised that Halloween was a big event. Chapel Hill had a wild party on Franklin Street, just across from UNC, a festive free-for-all, full of costumed students. My husband and I always enjoyed watching them early in the evening, before the merrymaking inevitably got a bit out of hand.

But it wasn't until the early '90s, when I had a child and moved to a Durham neighborhood full of families, that Halloween became a holiday with a capital H. Adults and kids often spent weeks planning and making costumes in their spare time. One year my 6-year-old son begged to be a leopard, just like his favorite stuffed animal. Although I had zero sewing experience (aside from the ability to thread a needle and sew on a button), I spent hours at the kitchen table tape-measuring, cutting, stitching, cursing and weeping as I wrestled to create a costume from the thick acrylic leopard-print fur I'd bought at the local fabric shop. Three days before Halloween, with sore fingers and surrounded by tufts of fur, I nearly surrendered to the drugstore costume aisle.

Since a child's impending disappointment is a young mother's

invention, I had the presence of mind to swap needle and thread for my hot glue gun. Reader, I cut and pasted the faux fur onto a little gray sweatsuit. I even managed to repurpose a wire coat hanger to fashion a jaunty tail, and attached little leopard ears onto a headband. Success! Our leopard son ran through the neighborhood, crawling across lawns with his plastic pumpkin before popping up and roaring "Trick or Treat!" I've never forgotten how hard I worked on that costume and how very happy it made my little boy to transform into the powerful wild animal of his dreams.

Though my little leopard has grown and flown, I find that Halloween is the one holiday I most look forward to each year. It's perfect: lighthearted, not hot and loud like July 4th or as overwhelmingly busy as Christmas, nor as stressful as hosting friends and family at Thanksgiving. Each year my husband and I carve a jack-o'-lantern, set up lawn chairs and a table with candy in our driveway, and watch what we call the Carolina Beach Halloween Parade. That's because Carolina Sands, our little island neighborhood, is the best place on the island to spend Halloween. That's in part because we're a tight-knit, smallish neighborhood with few easy shortcuts for cars, so parents often park outside the neighborhood and let their little ones run in packs down the streets. But it's also because we are a friendly, welcoming community.

Like most neighborhoods, people have different ways of looking and being in the world; a tour of Facebook reveals folks have plenty of differences in religion, culture, politics and work. But at Halloween, the only thing you see on social media is neighbors coming together to make sure that all the kids have a great time.

Come October, the neighborhood Facebook page is filled with questions concerning how much candy we each need to buy. One neighbor buys his candy with his weekly groceries, a couple of bags at a time, starting in September, so as not to blow his October budget. Folks post about candy sales and share BOGO coupons, and new residents ask if 2,000 pieces of candy will be enough. (The answer: Maybe. When a house runs out of candy, it's lights off, and curtains drawn, because the kids don't stop coming until the last house has run dry.)

I've never lived in a place where so many families go all out for the holiday. Empty lots are transformed into spooky, cobweb-covered graveyards, and signs for favorite political candidates are replaced temporarily with skeletons decked out in pirate garb or Hawaiian shirts and surfboards. (We are a beach community, after all.) The parade lasts from sundown till about 9. Some of our favorites from the last couple of years include a golf cart full of tiny Shriners, a meticulously constructed Edward Scissorhands, a toddler dressed as a little old lady (complete with pink track suit, pearls, rhinestone cat-eye glasses and a tiny walker), and a Colonel Sanders costume that at first glance we thought was a Tom Wolfe getup.

The thing I love most about Halloween is the variety of costumes, and the armchair psychologist in me enjoys speculating on why kids and parents choose the costumes they do. Will the children in the *Jurassic Park* costumes someday study filmmaking or paleontology? Will the kids dressed as Shriners become philanthropists? Time will tell. But what fun it is to watch people transform into someone else for a night and roam from door to door and be welcomed with a smile and a treat over and over again, a gesture of love on what's supposed to be the scariest night of the year.

Author and creative writing instructor Virginia Holman lives and writes in Carolina Beach.

WELCOME

KITCHEN

What's Cooking?

Behind a Front Street mansion, a 19th-century kitchen holds pride of place

By William Irvine

Photographs By Rick Ricozzi

When William Belvedere Meares (1787-1841) built his Greek Revival brick residence in 1826 on the present site of the downtown post office, it was one of the showplaces of Wilmington. A member of the Senate from 1828-34 and the founder of the Bank of the Cape Fear, Meares also owned Bluff Plantation in Brunswick County. The three-story Wilmington house was later occupied by Union troops in 1865, when it served as a hospital for the 7th Connecticut and 3rd Ohio Volunteers; a later owner sold the land to the U.S. government (for the post office) and the house was moved, relatively intact, to its present location near Front and Church Streets in 1887.

In 2017 the Meares House was purchased by Matt Verge and Dan Spinello, who saw the potential to restore it to its former glory. "The owners had broken the house up into apartments in 1986," says Spinello. "They had a thought of moving back in, so the configurations have minimal walls removed so it could be easily converted back to a single-family house." There are now two apartments on each floor.

In addition to a large backyard that slopes gracefully down to the Cape Fear River, the house came with a Wilmington rarity — a one-story brick dependency, the former kitchen, which the pair soon renovated and offered as a rental property. It's one of the highlights of this year's Back Door Kitchen Tour, which will be hosted by the Residents of Old Wilmington on Oct. 12.

Julia Reed
ONE MAN'S FOLLY
THE EXCEPTIONAL HOUSES OF TURLOW CATHWOOD
BUNNY WILLIAMS
AN AFFAIR WITH A HOUSE
WANDERLUST

Beginning in Colonial times and through much of the 19th century, kitchens were often separated from the main house for a few good reasons: Having the kitchen in a different building kept the main house much cooler in the heat of summer and free of cooking odors; and in the event of a kitchen fire, the house would be safe from harm.

Ray Kennedy is a theater producer and director who has spent more than 30 years doing theatrical productions in Wilmington, mostly for the Opera House Theatre Company. He has owned a house in Wrightsville Beach for 20 years and recently returned to the area from New York, where he had spent time for the past decade. But he had downtown on his mind, and decided to rent out his Wrightsville Beach place and look for something in the historic district.

"My spiritual home is Thalian Hall," Kennedy confesses. "And I was spending a lot of time down here, so I thought I would give it a try. Many of my close friends live in the neighborhood." (When not downtown, Kennedy divides his time between a house in La Grange, North Carolina, and a place in Palm Beach.) So when he saw the kitchen house was for rent, he pounced.

The modest brick dwelling is a mere 550 square feet, but seems much larger, thanks in part to the 12-foot white clapboard beamed ceilings. The floors, formerly concrete, are now covered in attractive white oak. And the house is designed with many space-saving features.

One enters into a combined living room and kitchen, the latter occupying the entire east wall of the house. The walls feature floor-to-ceiling pine cabinets that conceal a refrigerator and freezer adjacent to a very tall, slender dishwasher. "We ended up buying the appliances at stores near New York, because they have things that are well-suited to smaller spaces like apartments, says Spinello. "Down here everything was way too big for the space." There are upper shelves for kitchen storage and a portion of Kennedy's majolica collection lines a high shelf.

The living area is centered around a large working fireplace, perhaps the only remnant of the original kitchen. The room features a portion of Kennedy's

highly personal collections of majolica and fine art, which includes works by Canadian artist John Bird, Jenny McKinnon Wright, Steve Bakunas — the husband of actress Linda Lavin, a friend of Kennedy's — and his friend Jacques Rosas.

Upon entering the cozy bedroom at the rear of the house, it becomes clear that you must be a serious neatnik to avoid perpetual clutter. There is the luggage at the foot of Kennedy's bed, for instance, which is full of clothes. "You just have to edit what you like to wear," he says with a laugh. There is room for an elegant 1800s desk and chair, however, and Kennedy has concealed a large-screen TV on the wall above the bedroom doorway.

The small bathroom has a marble counter with a basin sink, a highly functional design that allows room for two large storage drawers beneath. Outside the bathroom is a narrow door, which reveals a small stacked washer and dryer.

And the real treat is the spectacular backyard garden. "God led me here because it had a better garden," says Kennedy, an avid gardener who spent many years cultivating his backyard plot on New York's Upper West Side. There is an alleé of azaleas, huge camellias and a large live oak tree with a lawn running all the way down to the river. Kennedy has created a courtyard by the front of his house with smaller container plants and a large bed of sunflowers. And it doesn't sound like he is giving up this special place anytime soon: "I have always been a history buff and loved old houses, so living in an early-19th-century house, walking everywhere downtown, plus being on the river is just amazing."

William Irvine is the senior editor of Salt.

Residents of Old Wilmington's 14th annual Back Door Kitchen Tour will take place on Oct. 12 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. In addition to the Meares House, there will be eight other downtown properties open for tours. Tickets are $30. For information, call (910) 398-3723 or visit rowilmington.com. Since its founding in 1973, Residents of Old Wilmington (ROW) promotes preservation and beautification of the downtown historic districts through advocacy, volunteer projects and monetary grants.

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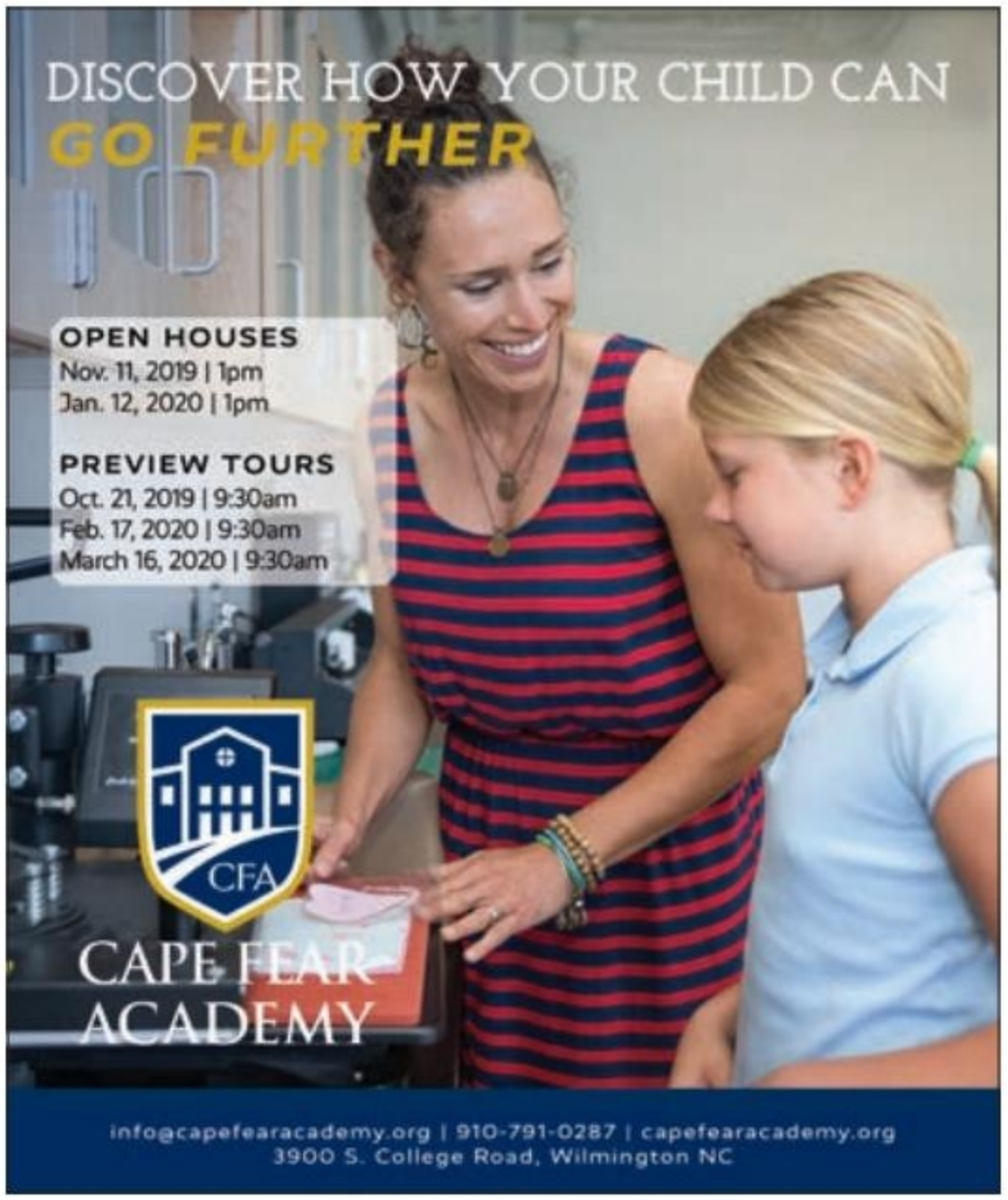

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ALMANAC

October

By Ash Alder

On mornings such as this — brisk, charged — the mourning doves that line the city wires suddenly take to the air, 50 or more of them in pastel twilight, swirling in wide, graceful circles as if stirred by some unseen hand, the sky some vast, invisible cauldron.

The sight is both delightful and haunting, and you feel as though you are witnessing some kind of living spell, a sacred ritual performed by Earth and her sentient beings.

This spell is called October. Perhaps you know it well?

Red and golden apples
Red and golden leaves
Ashes from the burn pile
Honey from the bees

Three caws from the raven
An acorn from the squirrel
A whisker from the black cat
Aster from a girl

Pansies from the garden
Barley, wheat, and rye
and what's an incantation without
Grandma's pumpkin pie

Bats in the Eaves

Spiders spin their webs in the rafters year-round, yet as Halloween approaches, neighbors deck their yards and porches with fake webs and creepy-crawlers, and supernatural beings sure to scare the trick-or-treaters.

But a word on the plastic bats: Why not welcome the real deal instead? Aside from being adorable — they're like winged squirrels with tiny fox-meets-bear-meets-pig-like faces — bats play a key role in natural pest control.

Consider installing a bat box in the eaves of your house and witness the mosquito population decline come next summer. If you build it, they will (hopefully) come. Especially if you plant night-scented flowers that attract moths and other night-flyers. Best if there's a nearby water source. And please, for the sake of the bats, no fake webs. Check out the Bat Conservation International website for information and resources: www.batcon.org/resources/getting-involved/bat-houses.

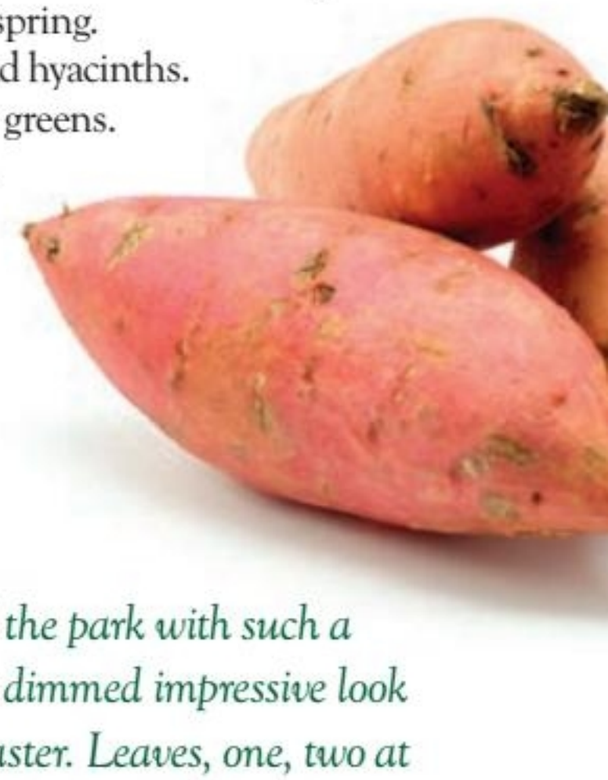
Before the Frost . . .

Dig up summer bulbs and the last sweet potatoes, compost fallen leaves, and in this transient season of light and shadow, *plant, plant, plant* for spring.

Daffodils, tulips, crocus and hyacinths.

Radishes, carrots and leafy greens.

And to color your autumn garden spectacular, blanket the earth with pansies.



October sunlight bathed the park with such a melting light that it had the dimmed impressive look of a landscape by an old master. Leaves, one, two at time, sidled down through the windless air.

– Elizabeth Enright,
Apple Seed and Apple Thorn, *1953*

Battle of the Pies

Let's get right to it: pumpkin or sweet potato? Since my mother never baked either one (or *any* pie, come to think of it), naturally I love them both. (Yes, I'll have another slice of that orange what-chamacallit.) But ask me to choose one pie over the other and watch my eyebrows do a funny dance.

I couldn't begin to describe the differences.

Turns out there are many, and that this infamous Battle of the Pies has caused many a great divide at many a Thanksgiving table.

It's pie, folks.

But I did a little sleuthing:

Pumpkin pie is spicier, denser, less caloric, decidedly Northern.

True Southerners cry for sweet potato, the sweeter, airier, more nutritious of the pies.

Except, apparently, for my maternal great-grandmother, who reportedly baked two pies at a time, both pumpkin — one for the table, one for my uncle.

"Tommy could eat an entire pie in one sitting," says my mom of her younger brother. "Nothing made my Grandmother Barlowe happier than the joy in his eyes when he saw her pumpkin pies."

"Unfortunately," Mom added, "I just don't care for them."

The long and the short of it, in this season of pumpkin-spiced everything, I can't help but wonder why *sweet potato latte* isn't such a buzzword.

Arts Calendar

Matilda! —The Musical

10/4-6

Ability Garden Plant Sale

10/19

Lighthouse Beer & Wine Festival

10/26

To add a calendar event, please contact calendar@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted by the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

10/3

An Evening with Bill Engvall

8 p.m. The Wilson Center presents an evening with the celebrated comedian and Grammy-nominated recording artist. Tickets: $43-$119. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage.

Jazz at the Cam

6:30-8 p.m. The Sidecar Social club performs this evening with its eclectic blend of old jazz, rhythm and blues and Latin music. Admission: $12-$25. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th St., Wilmington. Info: cameronartmuseum.org.

10/3-6

Diana of Dobson's

8 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Actress, suffragette and playwright Cicely Hamilton's romantic comedy about a wealthy woman who is disinherited by her father and becomes a shop girl. Tickets: $6-$15. Cultural Arts Building, UNCW, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-3500 or uncw.edu/theatre/productions/diana-of-dobsons.html.

10/3-6

U.S. Open King Mackerel Tour

More than 400 boats compete in one of the biggest fishing tournaments on the East Coast. Admission: $340 per boat. Southport Marina, 606 W. West St., Southport. For info: (910) 457-6964 or usopenkmt.com.

10/4

Farewell Summer Jazz Funeral

7 p.m.-9 p.m. Come say goodbye to summer at a New Orleans-style jazz funeral. Procession begins at L and Atlantic Avenues and ends at the Pavilion. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Ave., Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or townofkurebeach.org.

Rock N Run .05K

6:30 p.m. Come for a half-mile run to benefit the Tammy Lynn Center for Developmental Disabilities. There will also be a party with live music by Thursday's Flight. Admission: $15-$75. Spectators free. Olsen Park, 5510 Olsen Park Lane, Wilmington. Info: 05kwilmington.org/home.html.

10/4-6

Matilda! —The Musical

7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 3 p.m. Thalian Association Community Theatre's production of the Roald Dahl classic, *Matilda!: The Musical*. Admission: $32. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or thalianhall.org.

Corn Maze and Ag Festival

The 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing is the inspiration for this year's 10-acre corn maze design. There is also a scavenger hunt, Mr. and Miss Pumpkin Pageant, and a tractor parade. Admission: $13-$25. Hubbs Farm, 10444 U.S. Highway 421 North, Clinton. For info: (910) 564-6709 or hubbsfarmnc.com.

10/5

Astronomy Program

6:30 p.m. Learn about the night sky at the Cape Fear Astronomy Society's Astronomy Program at Carolina Beach State Park. Telescopes will be set up for viewing of planets and stars. Admission: Free. Carolina Beach State Park, 1010 State Park Road,

Carolina Beach. For info: (910) 458-8206 or ncparks.gov.

ESA South End Surfing Contest

8 a.m. The Eastern Surfing Association hosts the South End Surfing Contest, featuring amateur ESA surfers of all ages. Admission: Free. Access 38 near Crystal Pier, South Lumina Avenue and Nathan Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-1118 or esa-snc-com.

26th Annual Bark in the Park

11 a.m. Come watch intrepid canine athletes compete in this annual Frisbee fetching contest. Other competitions include Best Dressed Dog and Best Personality. Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach Park, 321 Causeway Drive, Wrightsville Beach. For info: (910) 256-7925 or towb.org.

10/5-6

40th Annual Riverfest

Saturday: 10 a.m.to 6 p.m.; Sunday: 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m. This annual street fair in downtown Wilmington features arts and crafts, food, dance performances, car shows, skateboard tournament, live music and more. Admission: Free. Market and Water streets, Wilmington. Info: (910) 471-0063 or wilmingtonriverfest.com.

10/6

Sheila E in Concert

7:30 p.m. Top touring percussionist Sheila Escovedo has been performing since she was a teenager with Prince, Herbie Hancock, Diana Ross, Lionel Richie and many others. Admission: $30-$68. The Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage/show/?id=3801.

10/7

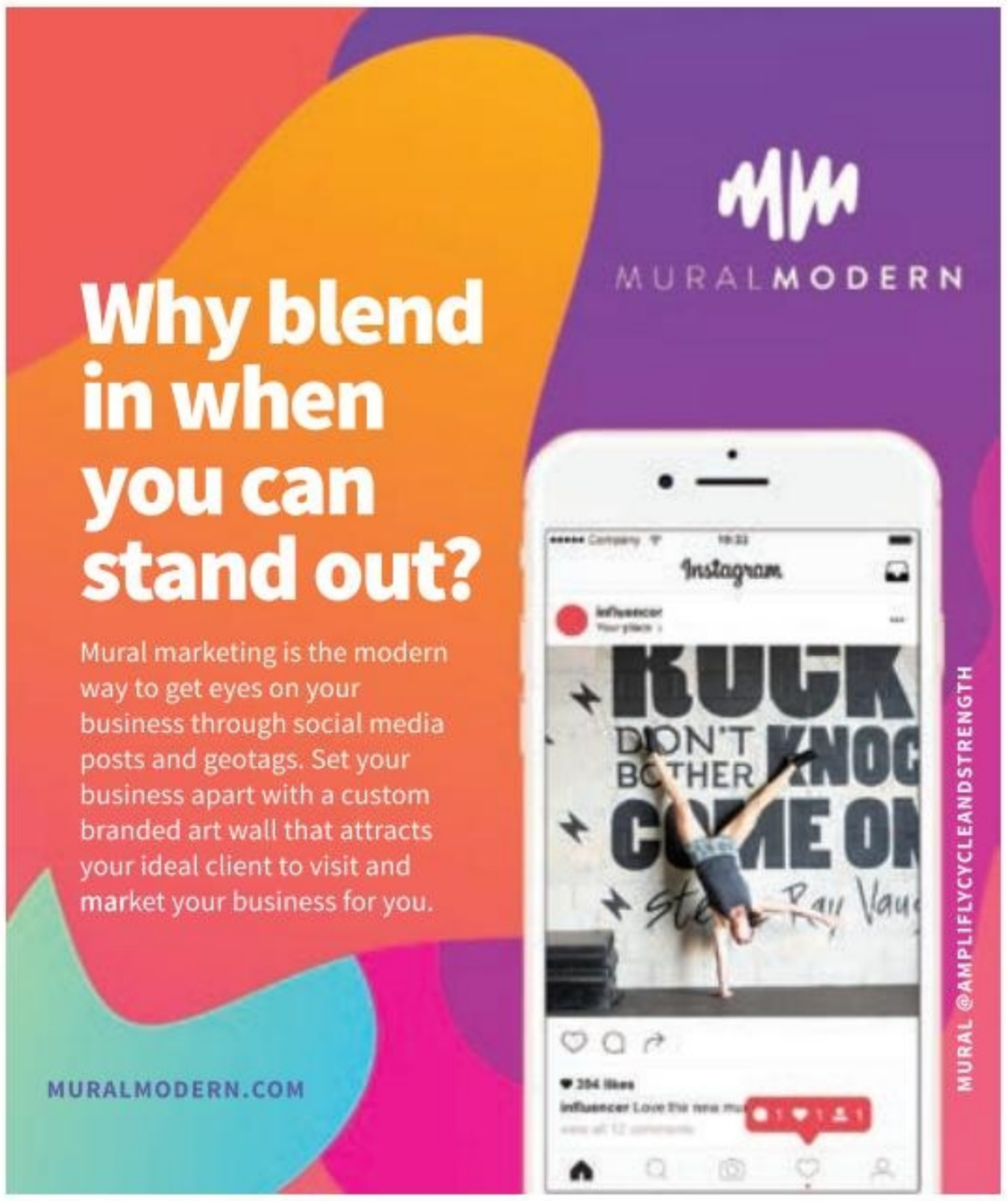
Brunswick County Golf Tournament and Games Day

11 a.m. This four-person scramble format includes 18 holes of golf and dinner. There is also a game day with bridge, canasta and other games, with lunch and dinner. Proceeds benefit the Good Shepherd Center. Tickets: $15-$100. Magnolia Greens Golf Course, 1800 Tommy Jacobs Drive, Leland. For info: (910) 763-4424 or goodshepherdwilmington.org.

10/11

UnMasked Masquerade Ball

6 p.m.-10 p.m. The UnMasked Masquerade Ball will include dancing, dinner, a silent auction and mask contest. The evening benefits Education Inside Out (EIO). Tickets: $100. The Terraces on Sir Tyler, 1826 Sir Tyler Drive, Wilmington. For info: more2educ8@gmail.com.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BRING IT DOWNTOWN

10/11-12

UpScale ReSale and Design Challenge

Friday, 6-9 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. This two-day fundraiser for Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity invites local design firms to furnish rooms with donated ReStore items. Admission: $5-$40. Coastline Convention and Event Center, 501 Nutt St., Wilmington. For info: (910) 686-9800 or capefearhabitat.org/upscale-resale.

10/12

Fire in the Pines Festival

10 a.m.-3 p.m. This family-friendly event includes live animals, scavenger hunts, activities with more than 40 environmental organizations, an appearance by Smokey Bear and a controlled burn of the park. Admission: Free. Halyburton Park, 4099 S. 17th St., Wilmington. Info: halyburtonpark.com; (910) 341-0076 or fireinthepines.org.

Harlem 100

7:30 p.m. A multimedia celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Harlem renaissance in collaboration with the National Jazz Museum in Harlem. Music of Bessie Smith, Duke Ellington, Billie Holliday and others. Admission: $15-$75. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or thalianhall.org.

Back Door Kitchen Tour

10 a.m.-4 p.m. Residents of Old Wilmington's annual Back Door Kitchen Tour visits nine houses in the historic district. Docents will lead house tours at each site. Proceeds benefit ROW, a nonprofit community organization dedicated to the improvement of historic Wilmington. Tickets: $25-$30. Various locations. Info: (919) 637-9410 or rowilmington.org.

10/16

L.A. Theatre Works: Seven

7:30 p.m. L.A. Theatre Works presents *Seven*, a documentary play that follows seven women from different countries as they overcome personal struggles and effect social change. Tickets: $20-$50. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or uncw.edu/art/presents/2019-2020/seven.html.

10/19

49th Annual Waccamaw Sioux Powwow

This two-day event features workshops for students about Native American culture, tribal dancing and drumming, and shopping with Native American traders. Tickets: $5-$8. Kids under 5 admitted free. Waccamaw Siouan Tribal Grounds, 7239 Old Lake Road, Bolton NC. Info: (910) 410-4070 or waccamaw-siouan.net/pow-wow.

Ironman 70.3 North Carolina Triathlon

This race, which features a 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike ride, and 13.1-mile run, begins in Wrightsville Beach and ends across from the USS North Carolina battleship in downtown Wilmington. South End, Wrightsville Beach. For registration and info: northcarolina70.3@ironman.com.

Wilmington Symphony Orchestra

7:30 p.m. An evening of Symphony Pops at the Wilson Center featuring "Aretha: A Tribute" with vocalists Capathia Jenkins and Ryan Shaw. With pre-concert performance from the Port City Trio. Admission: $25-$85. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or wilmingtonsymphony.org.

Ability Garden Plant Sale

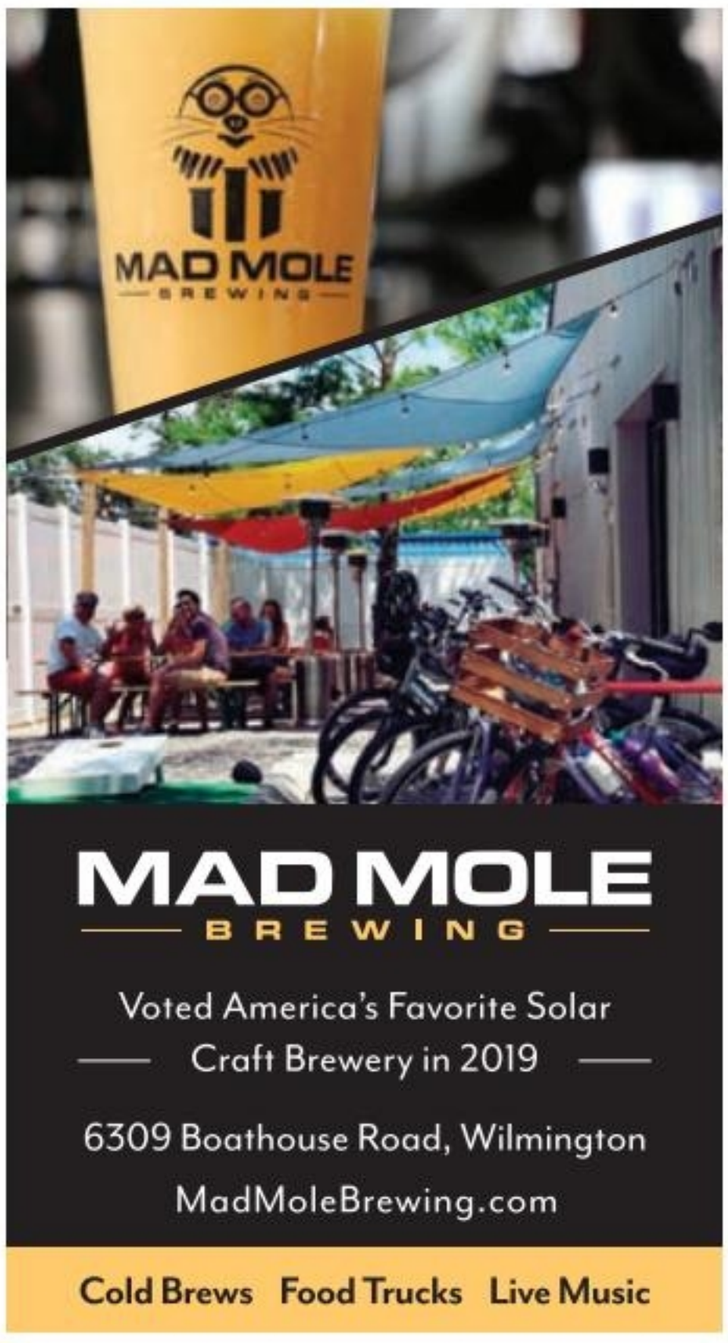
9 a.m.-12 p.m. The New Hanover County Arboretum hosts a sale of houseplants, herbs, succulents and native plants. Proceeds benefit the Ability Garden. Admission: Free. New Hanover County Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (773) 895-1504 or abilitygarden.org/upcoming-events.

10/19-20

Autumn With Topsail Festival

Saturday, 7:30 a.m.-8 p.m.; Sunday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

PORT CITY CRAVINGS



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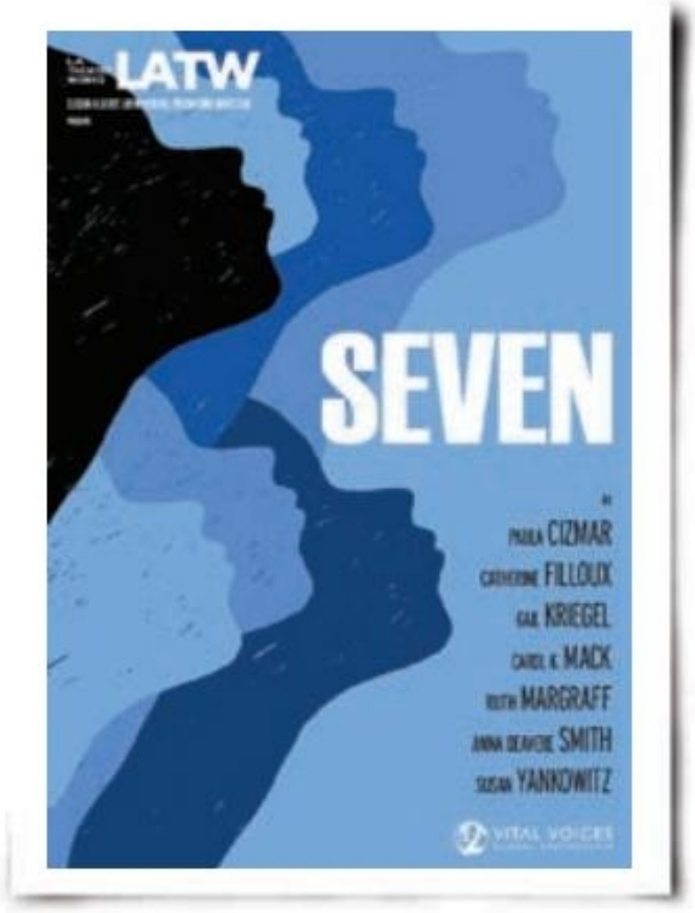


L.A. Theatre Works: Seven

10/16

The 31st annual Autumn With Topsail Festival features the works of more than 100 regional artists. There will be live music, a beer and wine garden, a food court and more. Admission: $6-$10. Historic Assembly Building, 720 Channel Blvd., Topsail, NC. For info: (912) 312-5244 or autumnwithtopsail.com.

10/22

Chick Corea Trilogy in Concert

7:30 p.m. Grammy Award-winning jazz pianist Chick Corea performs with bassist Christian McBride and drummer Brian Blade. Tickets: $37-$96. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

10/25

Choir of St. Paul's Concert

7:30 p.m. The North Carolina Baroque Orchestra with sopranos Constance Paolantonio and Nicole Thompson perform a program including Vivaldi's "Gloria" and "Dixit Dominus." Admission: $25. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 16 N. 16th St., Wilmington Info: (910) 762-4578 or spechurch.com.

10/26

Lighthouse Beer and Wine Festival

11:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.; 5 p.m.-9 p.m. The 19th annual festival benefits the Carousel Center and will feature more than 100 breweries and wineries (250-plus samplings), food trucks, and free taxis to take you home. Tickets: $20-$70. Port City Marina, 10 Harnett St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-8622 or lighthousebeerandwine.com.

10/26-27

Fiddler on the Roof

Saturday, 3 and 7 p.m.; Sunday, 3 p.m. The Broadway production of the acclaimed musical Fiddler on the Roof comes to the Wilson Center. Tickets: $46-$96 Wilson Center, 703 N. Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday

Wrightsville Farmers Market

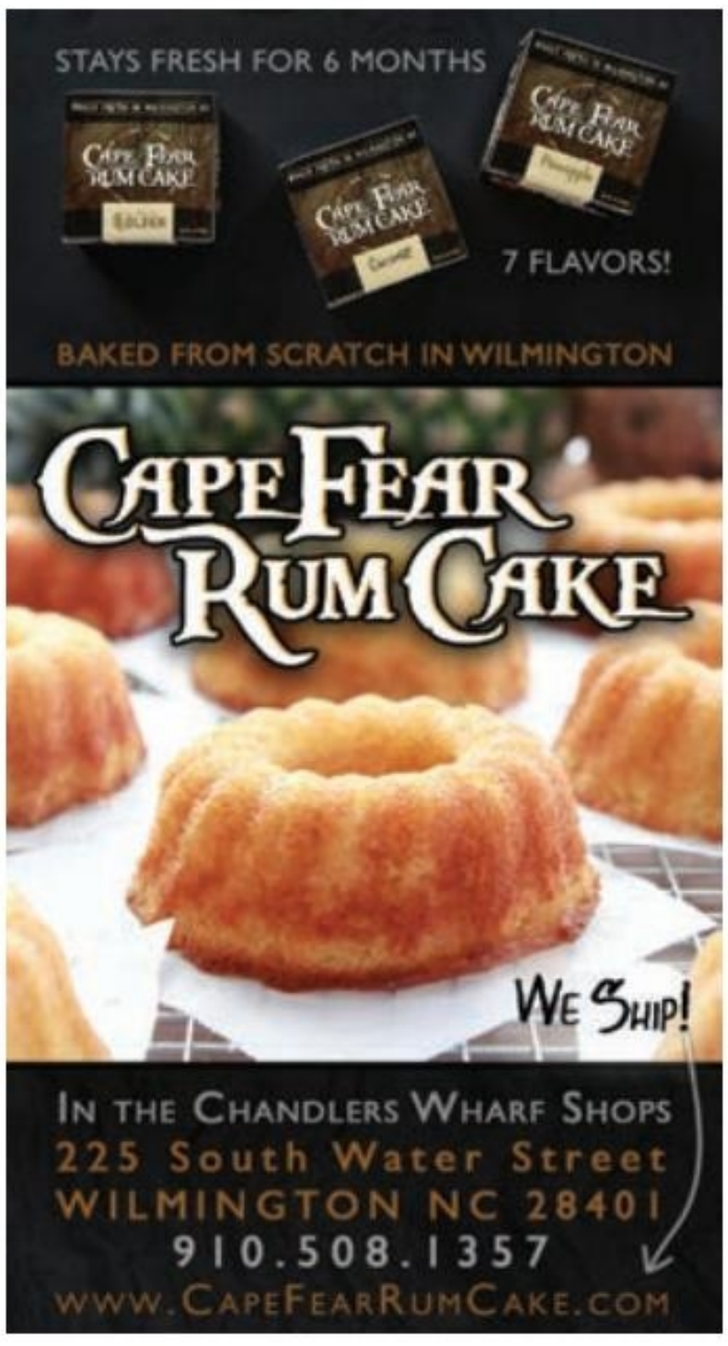
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside beach market offering a variety of fresh, locally grown produce, baked goods, plants and unique arts and crafts. Seawater Lane, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

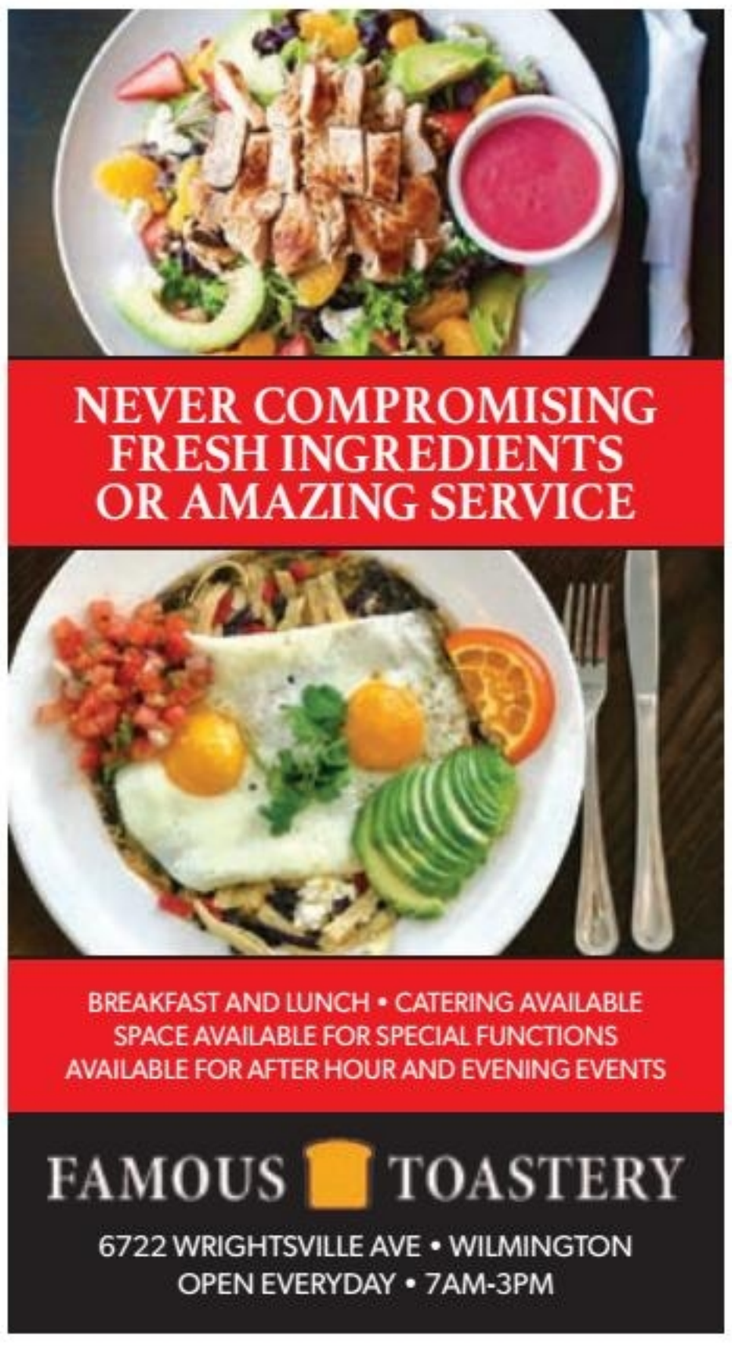
Tuesday

Wine Tasting

6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus small plate specials all night. Admission: Free. The Fortunate Glass, 29 S.

PORT CITY CRAVINGS

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Cape Fear Blues Jam
8 p.m. A night of live music performed by the area's best blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join in the fun. Admission: Free. The Rusty Nail, 1310 S. Fifth Ave., Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Wednesday

Free Wine Tasting at Sweet n Savory Cafe
5 p.m. – 8 p.m. Sample delicious wines for free. Pair them with a meal, dessert or appetizer and learn more about the wines of the world. Live music starts at 7. Admission: Free. Sweet n Savory Cafe, 1611 Pavilion Place, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-0115 or www.swetnsavorycafe.com.

Weekly Exhibition Tours
1:30 p.m.– 2:00 p.m. A weekly tour of the iconic Cameron Arts Museum, featuring presentations about the various exhibits and the selection and installation process. Cameron Arts Museum, 3201 S. 17th St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartsmuseum.org.

Ogden Farmers Market
8 a.m.–1 p.m. Local farmers, producers and artisans sell fresh fruits, veggies, plants, eggs, cheese, meat, honey, baked goods, wine, bath products and more. Ogden Park, 615 Ogden Park Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/events-calendar/ogden-farmers-market.

Poplar Grove Farmers Market
8 a.m.–1 p.m. Open-air market held on the front lawn of historic Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, plants, herbs, baked goods and handmade artisan crafts. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 U.S. Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Thursday

Wrightsville Beach Brewery Farmers Market
2 p.m.–6 p.m. Come support local farmers and artisans every Thursday afternoon in the beer garden at the Wrightsville Beach Brewery. Shop for eggs, veggies, meat, honey, and handmade crafts while enjoying one of the Brewery's tasty beers. Stay for live music afterward. Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach Brewery, 6201 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-4938 or www.wbbeer.com.

Yoga at the CAM
12–1 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. Sessions are ongoing and are open to both beginners and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Friday and Saturday

Cape Fear Museum Little Explorers
10 a.m. Meet your friends in Museum Park for fun, hands-on activities! Enjoy interactive circle time, conduct exciting experiments, and play games related to a weekly theme. Perfect for children ages 3 to 6 and their adult helpers. Admission: Free. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4370 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

Blackwater Adventure Tours
Join in an educational guided boat tour from downtown Wilmington to River Bluffs, exploring the mysterious beauty of the Northeast Cape Fear River. See website for schedule. River Bluffs, 1100 Chair Road, Castle Hayne. Info: (910) 623-5015 or www.riverbluffsliving.com.

Saturday

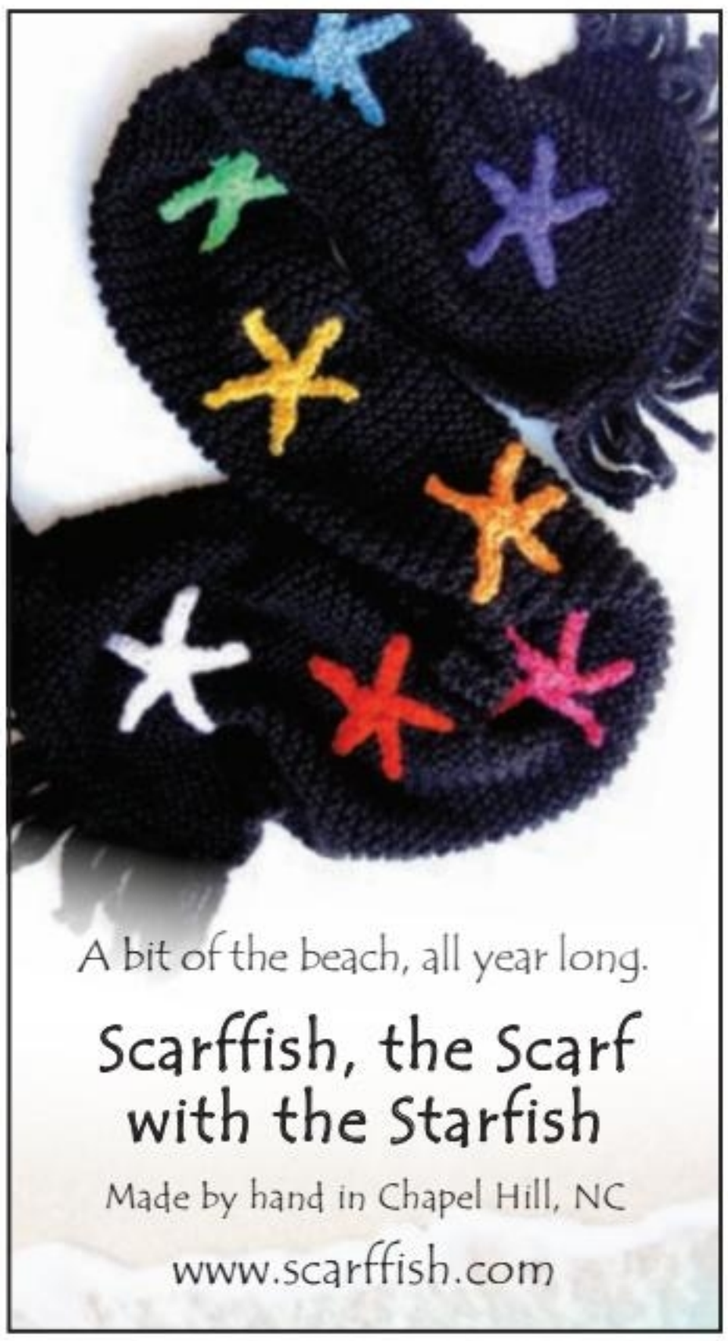
Carolina Beach Farmers Market
8 a.m.–1 p.m. Outdoor "island-style" market featuring live music and local growers, producers and artisans selling fresh local produce, wines meats, baked goods, herbal products and handmade crafts. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 and Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-2977 or www.carolinabeachfarmersmarket.com.

Wilmington Farmers Market at Tidal Creek
8 a.m.–1 p.m. Weekly gathering of vetted vendors with fresh produce straight from the farm. Sign up for the weekly newsletter for advanced news of the coming weekend's harvest. 5329 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. For info: thewilmingtonfarmersmarket.com.

Riverfront Farmers Market
8 a.m.–1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artisans, crafters and live music along the banks of the Cape Fear River. Riverfront Park, North Water St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtondowntown.com/events/farmers-market.

Taste of Downtown Wilmington
2:15 p.m., 2:45 p.m., 3:15 p.m. A weekly gourmet food tour by Taste Carolina, featuring some of downtown Wilmington's best restaurants. Each time slot showcases different food. See website for details. Admission: $55–75. Riverwalk at Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (919) 237-2254 or www.tastecarolina.net/wilmington/.

SALT SERVICES



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Port City People

Last Chance for White Pants Gala

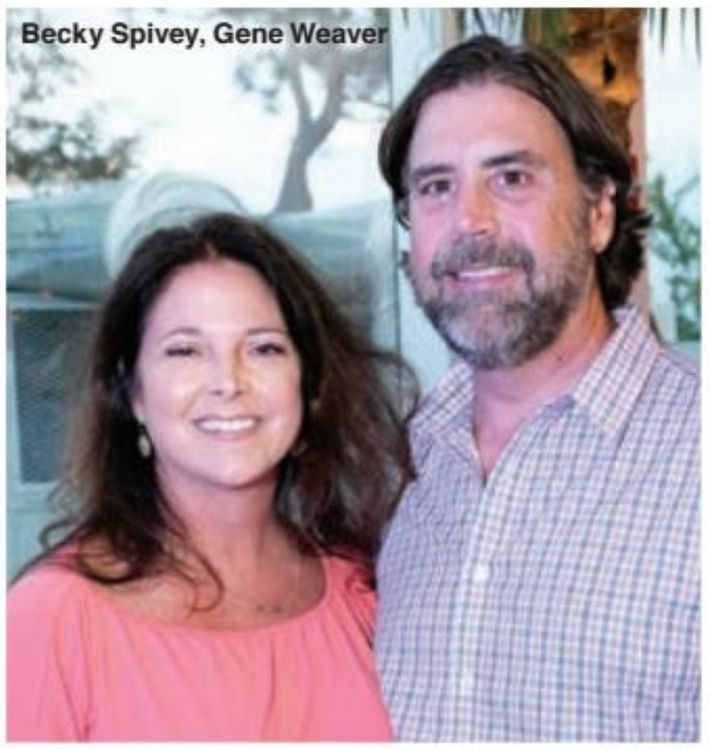
Hosted by Lower Cape Fear Hospice

Saturday, August 24, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Sarah Osborne, Craig Wagner

Ashley Miller, Pattie Jacaruso, Michelle Clark, Clayton Gsell


Becky Spivey, Gene Weaver

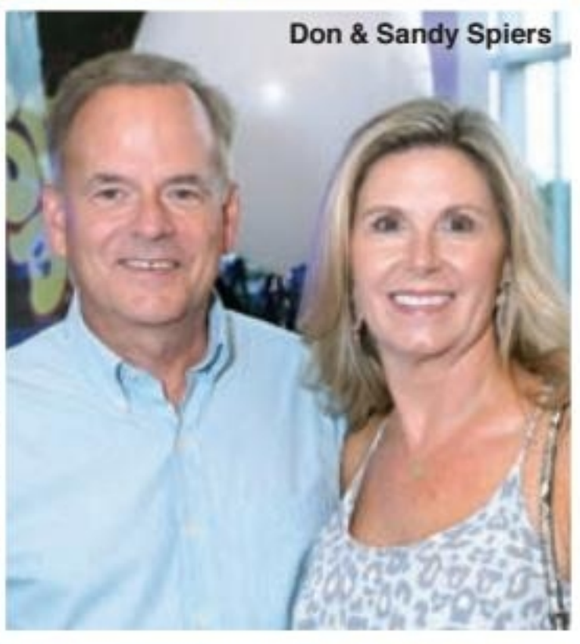
Cheryl McPherson, Kevin Wynne

Kathy Clay, Missy Combs, Andy Combs, Dana Fisher

Maggie & Mat Elam

Leigh Morton, Mary Grogg Fountain, Randy Aldridge

Sharon Laney, Mike Brown, Anna Brown, Marc Biemer, Lisa Weeks


Don & Sandy Spiers

Andy Hunt, Angel Banks

Drew Combs, Alexandra Good, Jessica & Christian Rhue

Tom & Melissa Quinlan

Port City People

Lumina Daze

A Benefit for the Wrightsville Beach Museum

Sunday, August 25, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Gwen & Caroljane Roberson, Croatia Garner, Gwendolyn Roberson

Mary & Reggie Honbarrier, Anne Cunningham, Mike Penny

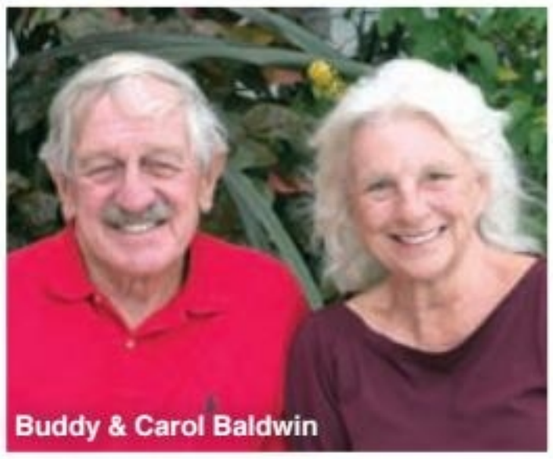
Laura McFayden, Wilmington Big Band

Tammy Pruden, Whitman Craig

Paul Power, Jennifer Brady, Nina Blackwell, David Donohue

Christine Coy, Kristin Bauer, Jenna Goldstein

Matthew Bradley, Julia Singer


Buddy & Carol Baldwin

Stephen Terry, Merlee Hill

Mary Allison, Gary Miller

Port City People

Wilmington's Epicurean Evening

A Benefit for the Methodist Home for Children

Thursday, August 29, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Hayes, Mikki, Catherine, Jessie & Brooks Perry

Cheryl & Shawn Blackwelder, Vann Pearsall, JC Lyle

Dick Morrison

Chris Toffer, Danielle Eriksson

Frances Weller

Marc & Robbie Diemer, Kathy & Jim Busby

Sybil Stokes, Lisa McCall

Jason Brown

Kathy Spada, Greg Lewis

Christina & Jackson Norvell

Port City People

Grand Slam Bash

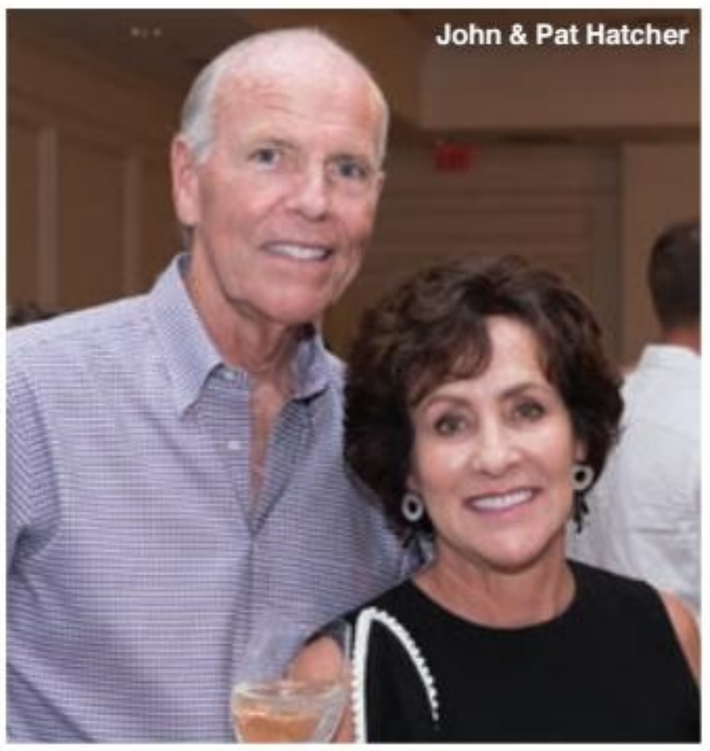
The Landfall Foundation's
"Tama Tea Legends of Tennis"

Saturday, September 14, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Stan & Emily Hollingsworth

Cheryl & Bret Garnett, Sam Gore


John & Pat Hatcher

Michelle & Gary Sherman

Brock Lynch, Gary Chadwick, Lauren Isenhour

Ed & Cheryl Micone

Sam Catlett, Ken & Lena White, Stephanie Tucker

Kevin Bradley, Michele Clark, Aimee & Rick Lamy

Kat O'Malley, John Daniels, Amy Formanek

Bruce & Amanda Mason, Courtney Burell

Cory & Jack Noonan

Long Live, Libra!

And Scorpio, too

BY ASTRID STELLANOVA

In the mists of ancient time before pumpkin spice lattes, Star Children, we only had golden pumpkins, autumn leaves, marigolds and Halloween to keep us happy in October.

Ruled by Venus, those born in early October are balanced Libras, but the later October born, with powerful Pluto as their ruler, are passionate Scorpios. Long before old Astrid, we had Dr. Spock to tell us how special October babies are. Strong, long-lived — more months of sunshine means more vitamin D for these babies. Strong minds and even stronger opinions. More presidents — John Adams, Theodore Roosevelt and Dwight Eisenhower, to name a few — are born in October than in any other month. If they can't rule over you, they'll entertain you, like Simon Cowell, Julie Andrews, John Lennon, Katy Perry and Cardi B.

Libra (September 23–October 22)

There's original you, and then there's new you. There's no shame in your game because that resilience makes you ever stronger. Sugar, you've had more comebacks than Sonny Bono after he split with Cher. Sonny bought a restaurant, added a whole new verse to "Bang Bang," (for one of Cher's later solo albums) and took up skiing. Wait — on second thought, *don't pull a Sonny*. Don't go to the big boy slope. Stay on the bunny slope and wear a helmet.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21

Think about *Sesame Street*: One of these things doesn't belong here. What might that be? Can you see the ways that you have wandered off into the weeds when you were looking for the ball? Eyes back on the ball, Darlin'. There ain't nothing worth risking what you're risking.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)

If you don't make a change, the one you've been stalling on, you will know it. Here's how: Regret will start stinking up the place like a bag of stale pork rinds. Cha-cha-change will make you feel like a whole new person, even a real grownup.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)

Oh, what a flap dang doodle you got into. Is your legal advisor R. Kelly's? Yes, you've won before, but this time you don't want to test the limits. Throw it in reverse; rethink your situation. Lordamercy, you could use a better braking and thinking system.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)

Listen, Ringmaster. This ain't your monkey, and it sure ain't your circus, Bud. Try not to dominate when you know the plan is not yours to control. The temptation to take charge of all the circus rings is one of your biggest urges, but, uh, no.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)

Oh, Lordy. This drama you're starring in is about as fun as taking a bubble bath with a hair dryer. You'll get lots of reaction, but none that a normal person would want to experience. Something about this reeks of wrong place, wrong door.

Aries (March 21–April 19)

In recent weeks, there's been a surreal story line involving you and your closest friends. If it keeps up, you'll have to fish your eyeballs out of the soup bowl. You know so much it is about to bust you wide open. But do your best to contain it, Baby.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)

Here's what my Mama used to tell me at times like this: Keep things high and tight. And if at all possible, dry. Yes, the creek is rising and you really didn't plan on buying a duck boat. Sugar, if you see this as adventure, it really will be a giggle.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)

Your nearest and dearest think they're Rat Pack Royalty. If anything, you should be the front person swinging the mic. Stop traveling with rats if you don't want to be mistaken for their entourage, Sugar Bean. It's not your destiny to be a groupie.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)

An ounce of pretense is worth a pound of manure. That's what you know in your heart of hearts, yet you allow one pretentious somebody to cause you a whole poopie storm of trouble. Windex won't clean everything but at least it can clean your glasses and let you see things more clearly.

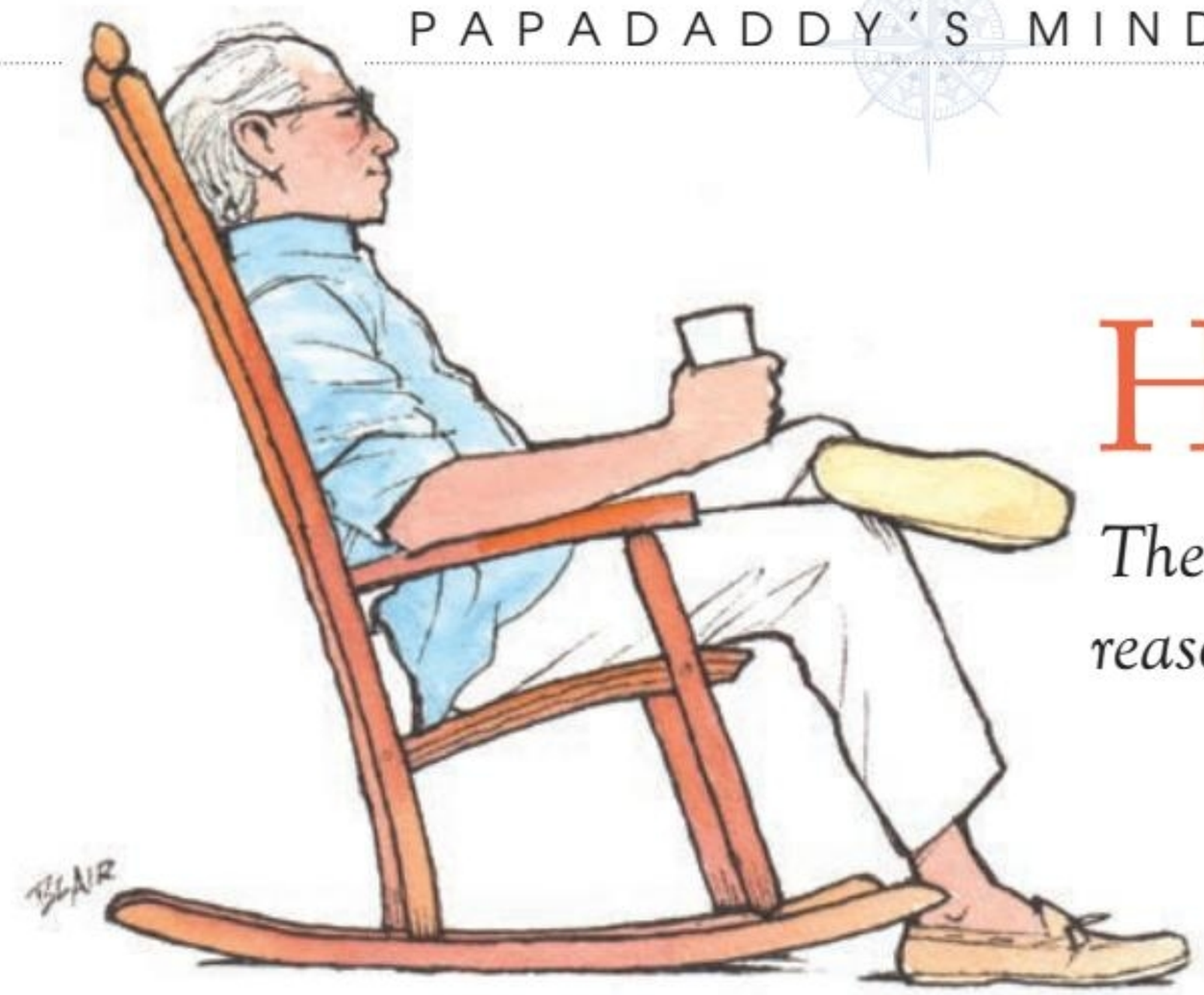
Leo (July 23–August 22)

You may be slick, but even you can't slide on barbed wire. Take the opportunity to say *no thank you* to what looked like a great escape opportunity from what must feel like your personal Alcatraz. If you don't, you might wind up getting important pieces of you rearranged.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)

If you stir in that hot mess, are you willing to lick the spoon? No, I didn't think so, Darlin'. You were a fine instigator of a situation that tickled you silly, but now the fun is over. Try to make amends with a friend that didn't find it funny.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.



Humor Me

These are difficult times. More reason than ever to ease up and have a good laugh

By Clyde Edgerton

In a small town stands a stucco building with two signs out front, one large, one small.

The large sign: Juanita's Veterinary and Taxidermy Shop.

The small sign: Either Way You Get Your Cat Back.

Humor sometimes is forced to the backseat during this age of monster hurricanes, deadly drugs, poverty, wasteful wealth, anxiety, senseless car deaths, gun deaths, higher suicide rates, declining lifespans ... WHOA! STOP!

Are the times really that bad? Or are the times being covered in such depth with penetrating media platforms, social and otherwise, that we just *think* times are worse than ever?

I mean, we at least got past the Middle Ages.

Answer: The times really are that bad . . . and there may be small, smooth ways to move, in your head, against bad times. To find a kind of comfort, a kind of distance from the noise.

Humor lightens the load. In some cases, humor close to home, maybe in the neighborhood.

A man who happens to be blind stands on the corner at Market and Third. His Seeing Eye dog is peeing on his leg. The man is trying to feed his dog a Fig Newton. A woman across the street sees what's happening, checks for traffic, walks over and says, "Excuse me, sir, did you know your dog was peeing on your leg?"

"Yep," says the man.

"Well," says the woman, "why are you trying to feed your dog a Fig Newton?"

The man says, "When I find his head, I'm gonna kick his ass."

A small funny story (except to the dog, perhaps).

A different kind of entertainment tends to come from other places, from big obscene movie stories, for example — stories with blazing killer weapons and blatant blasts of blood. These movies seem to compete with our big crazy times, and maybe that's why fans flock to them. These movies seem to say, "The world is getting crazier and uglier and more violent, and thus citizens deserve crazier and uglier and more violent movies. We are keeping up with the times."

But crazy times also create the need for us to find more little stories from our *own* neighborhoods and communities. Sit on your front porch for a while. Watch. Listen. Talk to a neighbor.

Go buy some honey, see what happens.

Recently, a friend said he'd take me to a home where I could buy some good honey. He was a regular visitor. He knocks on the door to a sun porch. Somebody says, "Come in." Inside, an elderly woman (about my age) is sitting at a small table, putting together a giant jigsaw puzzle. Her husband is sitting on a couch across the room. I and the couple are introduced, we shake hands. My friend and I take seats, and I ask about the puzzle — something to talk about before I buy some honey.

"Oh, yeah," says the woman, "I do a lot of puzzles. I've probably done a hundred this year."

I look at her husband, sitting quietly on the couch, and ask him, "Do you do puzzles, too?"

"Oh, yeah," he says, slowly. "If we didn't have puzzles, we wouldn't have nothing to do."

That was not an answer I could make up or find in a joke book, but for me (as a writer) it was golden — a little local story I've been telling my friends and have now written down.

Put the news aside. Talk to a neighbor. Discover a joke, a little story. Fight the bad times that way. Dismiss the cellphone and computer and TV for hours at a time. Hang on to the humor. Put some peanut butter on a piece of toast, add a little honey, go sit on the porch. Watch, listen. Find a story.

Clyde Edgerton is the author of 10 novels, a memoir and most recently, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY BLAIR

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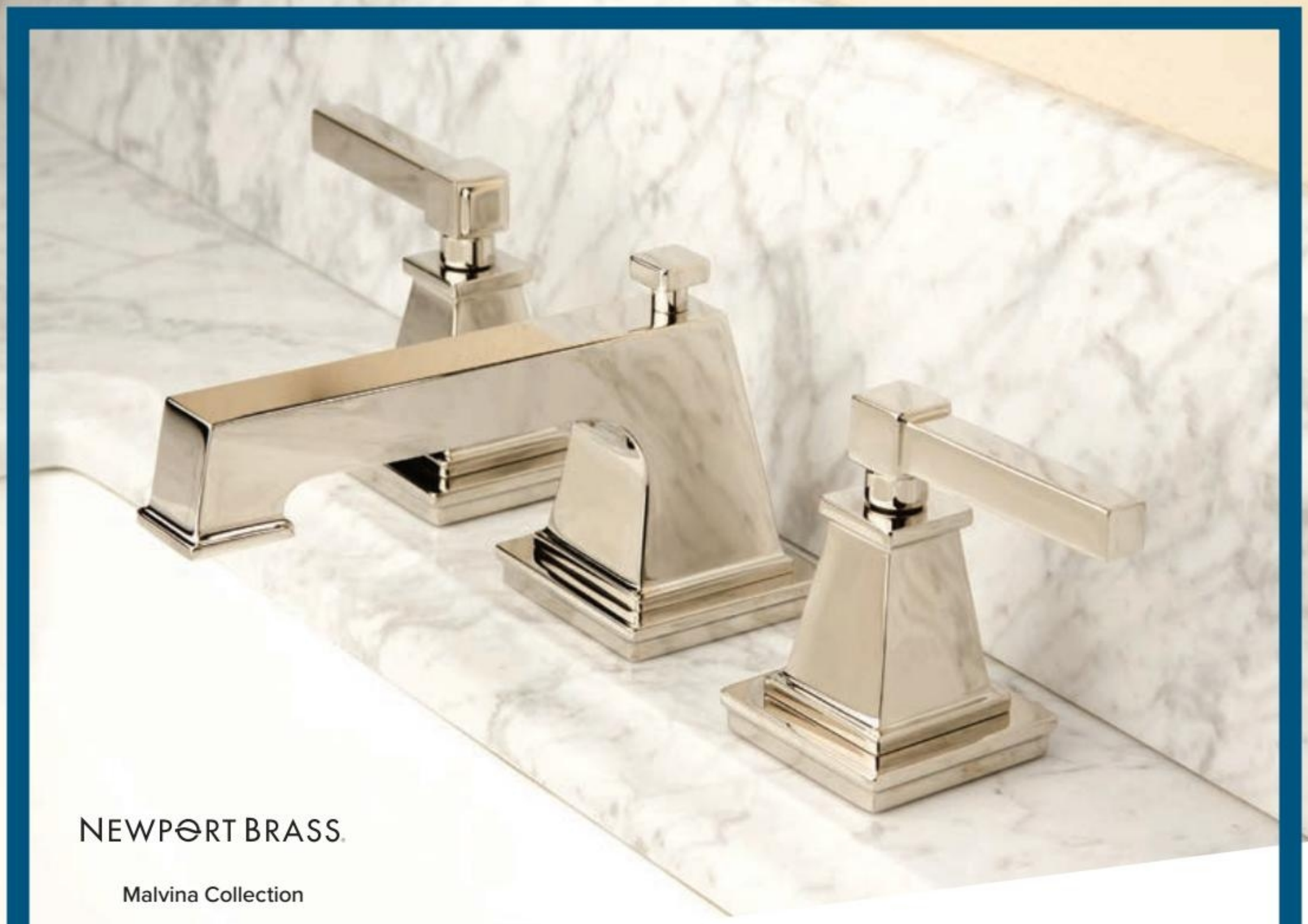

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